

# The ADAPT-r Creativity book

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# The ADAPT-r Creativity book

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# Preface

*Johan Verbeke*

This book comes at the very end of the ADAPT-r project. The project focusses on developing Creative practice research and works with venturous practitioners. These creative people develop innovative and creative solutions continuously in their daily activities. The research intends to deepen our understanding about these practices and processes.

This book however puts specific emphasis on creativity and creative processes. So, it takes a more distant perspective towards the venturous practice. It zooms in on specific moments and activities. This book doesn't provide the ultimate theory or discovery about creativity. Rather the book constitutes a patchwork of different positions and experiences. It values the differences between cultures and context of the contributing authors. It does not aim to present one vision, but to present cases, experiences and backgrounds which hopefully will inspire the reader. As was nicely formulated by Valentina Signore, the book presents a polyphony of voices from the specific field of Creative Practice Research, and namely of the ADAPT-r community.

Consequently, all partners in the process were asked to produce a chapter for this book. It allowed to value their local context and interest. It also

allowed different perspectives. All together, they contribute a valuable story on creativity, how, what and where. The contributions were commented, peer-reviewed, improved, connected and edited.

This preface is also a good place to thank all partners of the ADAPT-r project for their energy and work during the 4 year project period (2013-2016). The consortium existed of Faculty of Architecture Sint-Lucas (KU Leuven), RMIT Europe, Glasgow School of Arts, University of Westminster, University of Ljubljana, Estonian Academy of Arts, Aarhus School of Architecture. Each of these seven Partner Institutions invited some authors to contribute to their section. Each chapter mirrors a specific strategy and position. The members of the core team were the perfect platform to share insights, understanding and new knowledge. The many meetings have developed a shared plane of reference and this can be experienced when reading this book. The work has also been wonderfully supported by Marlies Vreeswijk and Hanne Van Den Biesen.

The book aims to share experiences and insights. To help people understand there is not one way, but many options and possibilities. We hope this book creates an important heritage for the future. A book that inspires and triggers further thinking. A book to look into and to learn from.

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# Perspectives on Creativity

*Johan Verbeke, Valentina Signore*

Creativity is a word which we use a lot and which seems to have lots of positive connotations. While management schools have courses on creativity, the so called creative disciplines –schools of art, design and architecture– mostly do not teach specific courses on creativity. Artists, designers and architects are commonly considered to be creative people by definition: somehow, while being not taught about creativity, they become “creative”. The studio work is certainly the didactic format that in the most diverse faculties and schools of arts, design and architecture, helps developing a creative attitude directly engaging in the practice within a specific field.

Creativity is defined as “the ability to produce original and unusual ideas, or to make something new or imaginative”<sup>1</sup>, “the ability to make or otherwise bring into existence something new, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form”<sup>2</sup> or “the use of the imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of an artistic work”<sup>3</sup>.

Many books have been published on Creativity. Methods have been developed to stimulate creative thinking and processes. Guidebooks have been made which include methods and their specific qualities and when to use them. Although very valuable, the books seldom include testimonies from creative people themselves. And this is exactly what this book tries to do, bring together insights and experiences from creative people, how they deal with creative processes; how they experience it; what is needed to stimulate them; what helps to make creative leaps in their thinking; and how they find a creative solution after getting stuck; etc.

Ranulph Glanville was one of the prominent scholars which admired the unusual and the explorative. He was very much engaged in creative processes and in helping people to look for positive and surprising findings in all his conversations and explorations.

Already in 2000 Ranulph Glanville<sup>4</sup> stated:

*“However, there are benefits in the loss of control: and these benefits strengthen our ability to believe in the centrality of our humanity. Some of these benefits are:  
The requirement that we take responsibility for our (inter)*

*actions, including our own meanings and their making.  
The requirement that we accept that there are possibilities beyond those we can imagine.  
Therefore, the requirement that we may be surprised.  
And that this surprise may lead to opportunities we did not imagine, enhancing our creativity by increasing the variety available to us. (We borrow from others.)  
And the requirement that we keep an open mind.  
And the requirement to keep an open eye for whatever opportunities may present themselves.  
The requirement that we are generous (in our acceptance of the differences and surprises we receive through conversation in an unmanageable situation).  
Therefore the requirement that we do not (unnecessarily) restrict possibilities, do not act as censors.  
The requirement that we increase what is possible, and the choices that go with this.  
Finally, the requirement that we accept error, and accept its occurrence as inevitable.  
These are stated as requirements, but they are also opportunities and they give freedoms.  
It is in these requirements that there lies a source for enhancing our creativity.”<sup>5</sup>*

Furthermore, in 2002 he wrote:

*“Not to be in control can expand the options available to us, that is, allows us to be more creative. Yet our culture seems to value and promote control to the point where control can be extraordinarily destructive. In this article, I show that there are clear limits to what we can control, and great dangers when these limits are exceeded: that control is often misapplied so that it takes the form of restriction rather than effective management: and that there are advantages in reformulating how we understand the value of control to allow us often to benefit from being out of control.”<sup>6</sup>*

These and many other of his ideas and understandings fed into the development of creative practice research at RMIT as well as the

1 Cambridge Dictionary: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/creativity>

2 Encyclopaedia Britannica <https://global.britannica.com/topic/creativity>

3 English Oxford Living Dictionaries <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/creativity>

4 Ranulph Glanville (1946-2014) was a scholar, cybernetician, design researcher, theorist, educator and multi-platform artist/designer/performer.

5 Glanville, R. (2000). The value of being unmanageable: Variety and creativity in cyberspace. In *The Black Box: Vol. I. Cybernetic circles* (pp. 521-531). Vienna: Edition Echoraum.

6 Glanville, R. (2002) On being out of control. [http://www.mom.arq.ufmg.br/mom/arq\\_interface/3a\\_aula/on\\_being\\_out\\_of\\_control.pdf](http://www.mom.arq.ufmg.br/mom/arq_interface/3a_aula/on_being_out_of_control.pdf)

research which developed at Sint-Lucas School of Architecture (now Faculty of Architecture, KU Leuven) since 2000. He also mentioned the work by Leon van Schaik at RMIT to the author which triggered him to visit Melbourne. Among the many things Ranulph did, he put one of the authors in contact for the first time with Leon van Schaik and with his pioneering work at RMIT: from there on started a fruitful collaboration whose impacts are manifold and still visible in the ADAPT-r project. It was the start of the collaboration between RMIT and Sint-Lucas.

The ADAPT-r way of developing research and creative practice simultaneously and inclusively, worked with practitioners who were active in a wide range of disciplines: architecture, design, arts, dance, fashion, music... It established a platform for sharing ideas and experiences; to learn from each other and the stimulate colleagues to go beyond the evident. It helped participants to find their voice: the PhD journey as a way to go a step further than just being creative.

Practitioners, supervisors and postdoctoral researchers involved in such a pioneering project are the authors of this book. Through their “practice based state of mind” the volume offers a wonderful view on creative processes and people, conditions for creativity, constraints, and interconnections. Next to this, the book displays an interesting array of different possible ways to look into the subject of Creativity.

Each of the seven Partner Institution invited some authors to contribute to their section. Each chapter mirrors a specific strategy: in some cases a common thematic was decided and explored through several perspectives on (i.e. the workplace by Aarhus School of Architecture) or a methodology (interviews with creative practitioners in KU Leuven’s chapter). The authors were left completely free to choose their entrance into the theme of creativity. This preface is a post-operam overarching chapter aiming at tracing back some files rouges. It reflects the ADAPT-r way to look at creative practice research from a meta-perspective: don’t impose any themes, category or restraint to the practitioners, but just look at what they actually, freely, do in order to trace out some of the possible connections, eventual recurrences and coincidences.

The overarching storyline for this book can be summarized as follows. Testimonies and experiences by creative individuals are the evidence (data) on which any insight and understanding of creativity should be build. Creative processes happen at a specific place in a specific context. These places act as traces of designers’ mental space and as triggers for creativity. Hence it is worth discussing

them and exploring their specificities. Furthermore, creativity is mostly limited by critical condition. They limit options or give a certain direction to thoughts. Furthermore, creativity seems not so much to happen on an island or ivory tower, it rather shows to happen in a responsive space between different entities. Creativity is in constant dialogue with its contextual framework. It is stimulated by creative triggers that come from public behaviours. It is evident that we need to develop and refine a specific language to discuss creativity: this is the enormous challenge tackled in the Glossary.

Chapter 1, Learning from a musician, a fashion designer, an architect and a dancer was developed at KU Leuven. The research group did choose the interview as a strategy to dig into the worlds of four creative people: a musician, a fashion designer, an architect and a dancer. These interviews highlight specific needs and attitudes of these venturous practitioners towards their creativity. The ideas and findings are valuable beyond the different disciplines, nationalities and personalities.

Chapter 2, Spaces of Creativity, was developed in Aarhus School of Architecture. The authors explore the workplaces both as traces of designers’ mental spaces and as triggers for creativity. The chapter tackles also the role of the broader spatial and cultural context, how they influence or challenge interactions between designers, collaborators, and clients. Three different approaches compose the picture of the chapter. The experienced researcher (ER) Anna Holder explores theories from Social Science and Humanities as reflected in Creative Practice Research; the doctoral fellow Siv Helene Stangeland (ESR) presents two drawings of hers and explores how the spatial contexts have influenced her relational design; finally a short photographic essay of workplaces of academic faculty members at the school by Claus Peder Pedersen lets the reader imagine the relation between the depicted working space and the creative process.

Chapter 3, Conditions for Creativity / Creative Practice was developed at University of Westminster. The group focuses on three main conditions for creativity and for Creative Practice. Katharine Heron focuses on the clients and the economy of Creative Industries, Maria Veltcheva reports on the restraints given by the commissions, using as a case study the Biennale di Venezia 2015, and finally Kester Rattenbury discusses the how Crits tacitly form an understanding of architectural design, of some fundamental yet mostly unspoken processes and principles at its base.

Chapter 4, Creativity in Practice: Practicing Creativity/ Conditions and Sentiments: contexts for creativity was developed at

the Glasgow School of Arts. The four heterogeneous contributions from the Glasgow School of Arts seem to place creativity in a responsive space between different entities: Laura Gonzales between the creative reader and a text, Robert Mantho between his own academic world and that of his collaborator Michael Wenrich, a practicing architect; Jo Croth and Ross Birrell explain the birth of their creative collaboration as a shared reaction to the fire which occurred at the Glasgow School of Art, finally the conversation between the architects Miranda Cameron and Robin Webster lets the reader grasp the nature of a fresh exchange of ideas, inputs, drawings.

Chapter 5, Politics for, in and through creative practice emerged from the Estonian Academy of Arts. The composite Estonian contribution places creativity in its constant dialogue with its contextual framework. Veronika Valk focuses on the challenges of Creative Practice Research in the regulatory context of the EAA; Michael Corr explores how his own practice has been influenced by the broader economic social and political context; the interviews with the artist Rosanne Van Klaveren and the architect-cybernetician-composer Ranulph Glanville explore respectively how through art/creativity one can relate and challenge the reality out there. Finally Karli Luik's exploration of his practice shows how to directly and creatively engage with a framework, starting with language.

Chapter 6, Public behaviours as triggers to creative practice research, was developed at University of Ljubljana. The chapter looks from three different standpoints at creative triggers that come from public behaviours in creative practice research. Tadeja Zupančič discusses regional research traditions, cultural differences, communication as triggers in creative practice research. Eli Hatleskog focusses on multiple and socially constructed knowledge in the ADAPT-r network; the PhD fellow Gitte Juul discusses how her nomadic model of practice actively engages with the diverse cultural and societal values of the different contexts in which she operates.

Chapter 7, Creative Practice Research Glossary, is authored by Richard Blythe and Marcelo Stamm from RMIT. It offers in six terms a condensed deposit of Creative Practice Research. Case Studies, Communities of Practice, Explanation of Methods, Public Behaviours, Tacit Knowledge, Transformative Triggers. The in-progress Creative Practice Research Glossary is a stratification of accumulated knowledge in 20 years of Creative Practice Research. Organically originated from the observation of Creative

Practice Research these terms were re-defined for the purposes of the ADAPT-r grant, have subsequently been further investigated by the post-doctoral researchers and continue to keep an open status. They are not normative but generative terms: their aim is to disclose possibilities within the singularities of the creative practices.

Authors approach the mysterious matter of creativity with very different methods: many choose to give voice to the creative practitioners themselves: either through the device of the interviews or with the direct accounts of their own creative work. Some bring visual traces of the creative process: photos, sketches, drawings and portraits. Some of those could be seen as performative demonstrations of creative actions.

Throughout the book we meet recurrent themes: such as *conditions for creativity*, (workplaces, spaces, tools, collaborations, contextual factors, such as social, economical and, political context). They are sometimes *constraints* that are turned into opportunities and *triggers* for the creative activity. We come back to the importance of interconnections, (with the network of human and non human entities with the creative community, the site, the landscape and human resources ); We meet several references to attitudes: opportunistic *attitude* toward circumstances (Crotch, Birrell), a philosophy of life existential (Signore), honesty (Jo), the influence of personality traits (Zupancic). Sometimes the contribution directly contest some *false myths* about creativity: such as the creative hero genius (Holder), the creative space as a matter of office décor or space planning (Holder), the magic of inspiration (Heron), the gift of having a talent. Two of the interviewed people Ranulph Glanville and Akira Kasai, while they both struggle to be labelled under a creative profession, warn their interlocutor about the risk of reflecting and writing about creativity: they bring back the reader to the ungraspable nature of the creative act.

# Chapter I

## Learning from a musician, a fashion designer, an architect and a dancer

*Jo Van Den Berghe, Valentina  
Signore and Johan Verbeke*

*In the beginning there was only Chaos. Then out of the void appeared Erebus the unknowable place where death and Night dwells. All else was empty, silent, endless, dark. Then, Eros was born bringing along the beginning of order...*

*No one can advise or help you – no one. There is only one thing you should do. Go into yourself. Find out the reason that commands you to write; see whether it has spread its roots into the very depths of your heart; confess to yourself whether you would have to die if you were forbidden to write. This most of all: ask yourself in the most silent hour of your night: must I write? Dig into yourself for a deep answer. And if this answer rings out in assent, if you meet this solemn question with a strong, simple “I must”, then build your life in accordance with this necessity; your whole life, even into its humblest and most indifferent hour, must become a sign and witness to this impulse.*

R.M. Rilke

This chapter came into being as a collective project of the ADAPT-r research group of the KUL.

The research group soon decided to approach the matter of creativity by conducting interviews with awarded practitioners from different fields. Jo Van Den Berghe met two Flemish artists: the musician and composer *Jeroen D’hoe* and the fashion designer *Jan-Jan Vanessche*; while Valentina Signore interviewed the Norwegian architect *Siv Helene Stangeland*, (who is involved in the ADAPT-r program) and the Japanese dancer and choreographer *Akira Kasai*. We chose these four creative practitioners not only because they are worldwide awarded creative practitioners but also because they are important reference points for our own creative works. Interviewing our own exempla we also indirectly expose our understanding of creativity.

The device of the interview was decided to gently access their “secrets” in order to make them available to a bigger public while at the same time preserving their embedment into the artist’s specific world and personality. This choice was in fact aimed to prevent their generous revelations to be reduced into a set of rules, to rather privilege a form able to show them as integral part of inspiring and unique stories.

However, in this introduction, we will make an attempt to briefly summarize some of the many insights that we have learned

from the four interviews: certainly they made us reflect on the importance of the context within which creative production takes place, as well as more generally on the situatedness of its process (meaning not only the space, but also the people and the culture in which the creation is embedded). A recurrent reference to the necessity of slowness and to the need of taking the time, together with the importance of iterations in the process cleared out any preconception of the creative act as the sudden gesture of a genius (cfr. also Ranulph Glanville). This means also that learning from previous experiences plays a key role in the development of their mastery (cfr also Ranulph Glanville). Finally, the confrontation with not-knowing (cfr also Adam Jakimowicz), a sense of honesty, and some (philosophical) fundamental vision on life seem to be the very drive and source of their innovative way of thinking and making.

The two pairs of interviews present different focuses: Jo van den Berghe pays particular attention on *tools*, *people* and *spaces*, while Valentina Signore concentrates on the role of *Siv* and *Akira* as “authors” of their creations: to what extent their mastery means to control the process and to what extent do they keep real their encounter with the unknown?

The four interviews span from a generous attempt to contribute to the improvement of creative processes, to questioning the very purpose of reflecting and writing on creativity. Akira Kasai, in the last interview, turns in fact Valentina’s questions back toward her. Rather than revealing his secrets he drives his interviewer (and with her, the reader as well) into a journey in her innermost thoughts, feelings, desires and fears. We conclude our contribution with Kasai’s provocations. The emptiness he evokes brings us back to the Greek mythology of Creation: Chaos is at the first place, but before order can start to appear, another unknowable, dark and mysterious entity emerges from the void. Many other things we may learn from others’ creation but we cannot create or even speak about creation if we don’t have a personal encounter with such unknown places.

Similarly to this void, the silences were the most intense and beautiful moments of the conversations. Although it was not possible to transcribe them in the written text, the reader may probably hear their echoes in the intensity and truthfulness of the spoken words, born out of a deep inner search.



# 1.1 Jeroen D'hoë interviewed by Jo Van Den Berghe.

Jeroen D'hoë (Ph.D from the Juilliard School of Music, New York) is a music composer, and professor of music composition at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven, Belgium and the Music Conservatorium in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The interview has been done at Jo Van Den Berghe's home studio in September 2014.

*Jo Van Den Berghe*

Jeroen, let's start this interview as a contribution to an ADAPT-r book about how creative processes work in order to improve these processes finally. The book has 'Creativity' as a working title and in my interview with you, I would like to talk about the following themes: spaces, tools and people.

How do you experience the space you choose to work in as a music composer, or the space that is depending on or determined by the expectation of the final result ?

As a second theme, I propose to discuss the tools you use for your specific creative work as a music composer.

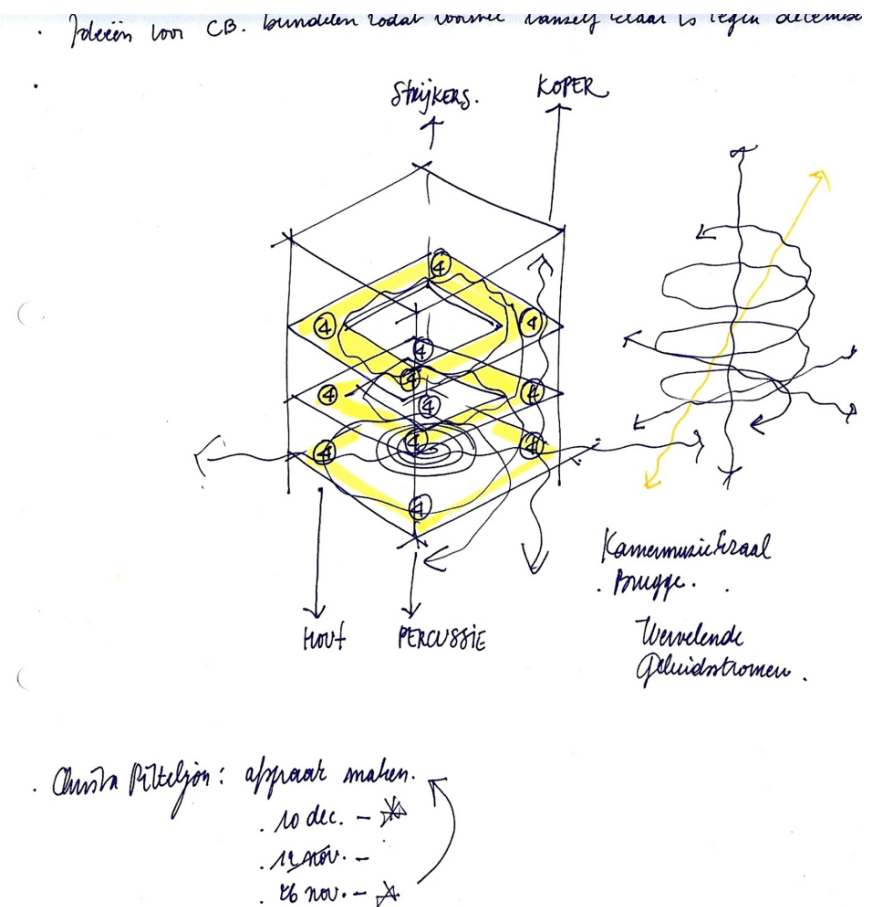
In the last theme, people, I like to explore how people are influencing your work as a composer in a positive or in a negative way. It may also be about the people you have in mind while your creative process is ongoing, or it can be a combination of both.

Let's first talk about what the specific spaces mean in your creative process.

*Jeroen D'hoë*

*Space always is a natural dimension in composing and in realizing music. If we listen to music, the concert room*

*Figure 1.1  
Sketch made  
by Jo Van Den  
Berghe during  
a work session  
with Jeroen  
D'hoë for the  
creation of  
Wekkerling  
(Jeroen  
D'hoë, Music  
Composer) at  
the Chamber  
Music Hall,  
Concertgebouw  
Brugge,  
Belgium,  
2010. In this  
sketch, Jeroen  
and Jo are  
musing together  
about how  
the musicians  
(people) would  
perform better  
due to their  
positions in the  
Chamber Music  
Hall (spaces),  
using the  
reverberation  
qualities of  
this space as  
an additional  
instrument  
(tools) in order  
to augment  
the impact of  
the piece on  
the audience  
(people) so as  
to turn this  
creation into  
a whirling  
spatial-  
temporal  
experience  
(space). This  
sketch elaborates  
on strings  
(strijkers),  
brass (koper),  
percussion  
(percussie)  
and wooden  
instruments  
(hout).*



*itself has a determining quality. An acoustic concert hall or a so called 'dry' concert hall makes a big difference in the projection and the reflection of sound. If I know in which space the concert takes place, my creative process of writing is always influenced. I do know that in what we composers call an over-acoustic space with a lot of resonance, the sounds of fast, vivid and tender music can be mixed up. Being influenced by the space itself composers write slow, sonorous sounds that are allowed to flow into one other. A very dry space however has the opposite effect permitting the composer towards a more intuitive, punctual attitude, an acoustic pointillism so to speak in which every detail can be discerned.*

*What I just mentioned is some sort of a common feeling between composers, but I would like to go one step further. While writing music as a composer I like to experience the intended internally. As composers are rather supposed to produce music in a static way, e.g. the pianist 'sits' at a piano, the concert room is not changing while playing music, nor is the position of the instrument or the position of the public, too.*

*The very interesting thing is trying to imagine that sound moves within a certain space like a dancer who makes a whirling movement on a stage. This creates a spatial rhythm which particularly interests me. Covering a certain distance in space within a certain time makes an interesting connection of spatial and temporal thinking.*

*Of course, we had a common project which was a fantastic experience that is called 'New feet for 5 years a minute'<sup>7</sup> that made me involve space in composition processes in music, like a dancer does. I tried to imagine how sound covers a certain distance in space. I have been developing this into a deeper understanding which is very important for what I am doing currently. In*

<sup>7</sup> New Feet for 5 years a Minute has been an artistic research project by Jo Van Den Bergh and Jeroen D'hoë, in which composition techniques of architecture and music have been made interchangeable in order to make both disciplines (architecture and music) learn from each other.

*architecture, to give one example, 10 meter can get a rhythm of 5 times 2 meter or of 2 times 5 meter what makes a very different experience. The whirling dancer causes an energy that can also be experienced by making sound, because sound is also the result of a very high energy. Striking one note on the keyboard of a piano produces a very strong concentrated energy that fades away afterwards during 10, 20 or 2 seconds. As a composer you can play with this space of time.*

*I only mentioned one instrument. The sound of five or ten instruments can be combined, collectively moving its sound in space in synchronic or asynchronic processes causing certain movements in sound and time. This is the deeper dimension of spatial thinking in sound and time. So space makes me rather think of this dimension than on the space of a concert hall.*

Thank you, Jeroen. Does the place where you compose also have an impact on your work? For example, if you compose in your studio or sitting in a train, does this influence your work? Does it make a difference? Do you try to escape your environmental condition to work very empathetically on your subject, moving away from the surrounding space in a way, or are you involving the impulses of the surrounding space into your work as a composer, which might move your composition into another direction?

*My workshop is of course a place where I feel good, it's a kind of laboratory where new ideas can be thought of and tried out. So it is a sort of a detached place where I cannot be disturbed. I have a good isolated big workshop where I can put my drawings that inspire me on the floor. On the other hand I always try to visit the place where the composition is planned to be performed. It can be a concert hall, a church, an exhibition place like recently a castle... I take photographs with my I-Phone. When I look back to these pictures, I kind of hear the acoustic possibilities of these spaces. Because walking through the places generates a natural acoustic intercourse with them,*



*for instance footsteps in the echo of a church. This hearing of space has become my second nature in the meantime. I also keep in mind the so-called sound of a space, so taking pictures is additive whereas I do need taking pictures to remember certain distances in rooms which is necessary for certain instruments.*

*But in my workshop I feel most comfortable as it is a detached place, where I am inspired by the pictures and the memories of sound of the location of execution of music, away from the place where the music will be brought. In this workshop I make drawings to visualize the music and I play the piano which is most important: to try out sounds. I also use the notation software system 'Sibelius', which writes notes from sounds, rhythms, arrangements. It is possible to create an elementary musical score which is to be refined several times afterwards. The final score will be read, executed and sung. So Sibelius is a medium for me.*

This introduces our second theme: the *tools* of which there are plenty. I think your workshop is one of them...

*Sure, it is my place to create. To create is to meditate. You have to lock up yourself, away from internet, emails or mobile. Every distraction must be excluded out of your biotope. David Van Reybrouck (writer) said that on his attic room, which is his workshop, he only put a kettle because quickly looking up something on internet, writing an email to a friend refrain him from working. Concentration for 1, 2, 3, 4 hours is necessary to get into the matter in order to generate creativity.*

*First condition is to isolate from daily reality. In that space I need a good instrument, my piano, to play on. It is the quality of that sound that brings me one step ahead. Next steps are developing the sound, varying, fine tuning into what I feel as a final product. Every detail has to match with the whole, note after note, it is a minute work like the work of a monk. So, as a conclusion, I say*

*that some tools have to be excluded, while other tools have to be present to feel as comfortable as possible.*

Do you also have a favourite pencil, a favourite pen, your favourite annotation paper, like architects have?

*Oh, yes, I have. Since my childhood I was keen to write with beautiful pencils, pen and ink. It is my sense of beauty that I am also looking for in the music I am composing. A beautiful pencil, a beautiful pen with my specific kind of ink. For every project I use to have a separate notebook in which I register every single idea, central or random. I compare it with an artistic blog. And of course my Mont-Blanc pen, I have it since one year now, and my special staff notation books, beautifully bound.*

What you show me now (Jeroen shows sketches of a music composition) has been done with this pen?

*Yes, this beautiful Mont-Blanc pen. And music annotation paper is also very important. I use paper from 'High-level Art', a famous editor of classical music, scores etc... They also produce empty music annotation paper, beautifully bound, onto which one can entrust one's first ideas about a composition. A natural way to write down not only verbally but also with real notes, rhythms, chords, ...*

So on the one hand there is the process of realizing or materializing an idea, but there is also the process of the idea getting realized or materialized by working on it at the same time. So the sound of a piano could be the materialization in that case. Other examples of generating an idea can be paper, pen, the sound of a room...

*Exactly, but I also get ideas that are less related to matter or space. Sometimes, the muse appears sitting in*

*a bus or washing the dishes. Or while taking a break just after searching one hour in the ideal place on the grand piano with the Mont Blanc pen. Or while making a walk as a break the idea can suddenly pop up too.*

The free moment can be as important as the working moment ... ?

*Yes, indeed, but in my experience, this rewards me after having worked intensively for at least one hour.*

*Free moments are not that free because there is the condition not to be distracted. For instance if I would send emails to friends and afterwards take a break for ten minutes, in fact this phenomenon of 'the fruitful break' never appears. I would say the state of mind, this concentration, is more important than the place because it can also happen on a bus.*

It might be a kind of flow that is generating ideas. Happening in an 'unguarded moment'?

*Indeed.*

The 'unguarded moment' is as important as 'the guarded moment' while being amidst a creative process?

*Yes, indeed. I receive these unguarded moments as a present that is so inspiring. These moments are indispensable for a continuous concentration. It is a kind of flow that generates these unguarded moments in which 'it' can happen.*

Maybe one more question about the working space: if you wouldn't have had a workshop and you would ask someone to design it, what would be the parameters to make it, materially? Material, proportions, light, no light, kind of artificial light. As an architect, I imagine that a composer asks me to make a kind of space with certain conditions...

Figure 1.2  
Jeroen D'hoë  
(Music  
Composer)  
at work on a  
music score on  
Highlevel Art  
with a Mont-  
Blanc fountain  
pen (tools), at  
a consciously  
chosen moment  
in his preferred  
summer garden  
(spaces),  
Hoegaarden,  
Belgium, 2016.

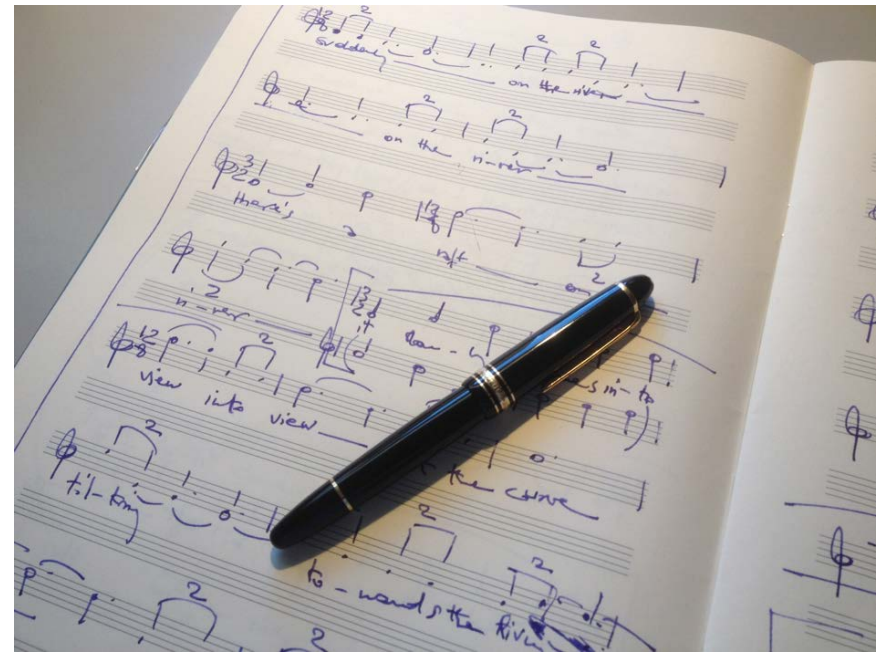


Figure 1.3  
Jeroen D'hoë  
(Music  
Composer)  
in an intense  
conversation  
with the  
musicians  
during a  
try-out session  
of *New Feet*,  
testing different  
versions of the  
piece just before  
a recording  
session at the  
Lemmens  
School of  
Music, Leuven,  
Belgium, 2013.



*Lots of space to be able to breath, enough light. It does not need to be direct light but smooth pleasant light that enables concentration for a long time. Wood makes a room agreeable and makes it sound softer. An environment in stone echoes louder and harder.*

Is the space itself, the room in this case, also an instrument, a kind of resonance box?

*Sure, unconsciously it certainly also creates resonance.*

...like a guitar, a violin, a cello...

*... yes, and like a concert hall.*

Now we come to the third theme: *people*.

*I never write without bearing in mind the people, the musicians who will create the piece of music. My musical score is ready for about 50 % or 70 % when I realize I still have a long way to go, even for developing new ideas, for fine tuning the technique of notifying. For the last 10 years, I systematically consult the people who invited me to compose a piece of music for a certain occasion, an orchestra, a concert creation, a concert or festival, and this about half a year before the final date. Then I have to meet the musicians. I already carry a kind of ideal sound by then, but in despite of my experience things are so amazing at that stage. Then I realize how much of fine tuning still has to be done in collaboration with these people. If someone plays lute, a world I could only partially imagine arises. When I hear a saxophone live in combination with a violin or a piano, it is very inspiring but also very confronting.*

*So I have to decide: this works and this does not work. A composer has to be very strict. I learned this by practice, to be honest, or by working with artists like Philip Cathérine who is ruthless. When it is beyond expectation, he throws it away, remakes it, changes structures, changes orchestration totally and keeps on searching for the ultimate solution. In my work this honesty, which I have*

*always had, has become a technique. So that is why I am repeating and fine tuning with my musicians four to six months before the first creation, on a secret place for some days. In real time I change different aspects in the score as well as the musicians do. We listen and consult each other about what is working, what not, if there is a problem: why? Too loud? Too soft...?*

*There are thousands of possibilities in the interaction with musicians and sometimes with the director of a music ensemble. So people are as important as the surrounding space and the tools. My first check-up is not the public but my partners in crime. They are the ones through whom I can check if it works or not. From that moment on, there is still 50 % or 70 % of work to do.*

Yes, and besides these artistic-technical partners, are other people influencing your work ?

*Well, yes, but allow me to add some more specifications. It is not so that musicians are influencing my work in terms of making creative choices. It is rather a feedback moment, like an actor who suggests something to the movie director: 'this works better than that, should we try it out?' So these feedback sessions are a kind of sound laboratory that I use to find out if my score works.*

*Sometimes, and additional to the musicians I work with, there are other creative partners involved in the process. Like my project in Gaasbeek 'Once upon a Castle' was realized by 15 creative people all together. These people were very influential and had an impact on me in the sense that there was reciprocity of giving and taking. There was sound reflection, visual reflection... In Gaasbeek, a British artistic collective has been invited to bring all the creative components together like an opera, for stage-management: suits, attributes, setting, video art, music. The partners kind of 'felt' each other and the director functioned like a coach in a football team. Of course there is a strong interaction between*



*all the participating disciplines. This was a marvellous experience, a nice change in the mostly solitary life of a composer which I cherish as well. Being asked to play in a team is most pleasant for me whereas writing a piece can take one year in your composing room. I also enjoyed the collaboration with you in 'New Feet for 5 Years a Minute', as it felt like a participation of joy, challenge, ambition, result, similar to this creative-artistic process. I like to work in both solitary projects and team projects. But I don't have to explain this to you.*

(nodding in agreement) As my final question—we are busy yet for more than half an hour, amazing—people who surround you like your wife and your children, are they involved in your artistic process? Do you consult them sometimes in moments of doubt?

*Yes sure, my wife has also studied Musicology. She is very intuitive and has a very good taste. She is for me—lucky me—the ultimate barometer. She is strict but in a positive way, very honest. If I feel something is not as it should be, she confirms or she does not tell that it does work. I am very fortunate that she helps me in this way with my creative processes. My children have been educated in this atmosphere of creating, and often they accompanied us on concerts, expositions or other cultural events. They are not that involved, but I can take them with me to a repetition. When I ask what they think about it, these are important moments of echo or feedback for me. The funny thing is, as I mainly work on classical music, at the cross-over to jazz and pop prevented me to be locked up. I know some colleagues are not aware of the privilege to work with music at this high level, but at the same time they are not aware how isolated one can become from the average concert lover. As if this art is no more connected to the people interested in added value.*

Or in life itself ...

*Yes. The freak of modern music and the freak of modern experimental music does exist but I don't think*

*it exceeds one percent of the people. So the gratitude of the people, the street value, I learned in New York where music does not know the safety of subsidization but where it has to work in the music hall or you do not sell tickets. In New York I learned the street value of composing and I apply this now in classical music without compromising myself but by creating in an authentic way. This is very interesting to me.*

Just one more question: as an architect and as a composer, we have 'heroes', also beyond our discipline. Are there heroes whose creation processes you have investigated?

*Yes, there is a long list...*

Just two of them...

*Mozart is very inspiring, besides the music itself, as a composer he was a genius for his attitude. He knew which simplicity he might admit. If he had only created music according to the unlimited intellectual capacities he reached easily, the average music lover would not have had connection with his art. He was smart enough to situate the level of complexity at a point where people could enjoy and enter his work yet at the same time he kept his level extremely high. This is really adorable and exceptional. Keeping a high level, but lowering the threshold.*

*The same goes for Leonard Bernstein who has written an iconic musical with West Side Story like nobody could have written it. It contains elements of Stravinsky, Bartok and Rachmaninov that Bernstein has integrated in a genius way in popular art. Mozart did the same, his music was of a very high level, but was integrated in theatre pieces with people laughing or being scared, triggering them, originating from fairy tales sometimes.*

*In the larger domain of art there is the painter Michael Borremans because he is very accessible with his figurative art, but at the same time his work always*

*contains deeper layers of mystery. You see a woman but she does not look at you, her hair is hanging up, you don't know what it is. You don't get answers and that mystery, this alienation is poetics and this is inspiring me.*

*I also like to write dancing themes or themes that permit to sing, very simple melodies in a sometimes medieval mood, because this contains common roots that we recognize. And then I will put a twist in it, some components that cause alienation. So it is not just medieval. Borremans explained that he is inspired by Velasquez, but he makes a Borremans-Velasquez if you permit me to say it in his words.*

Ok Jeroen, thank you for this interview.

*It was my pleasure!*

## 1.2 Jan-Jan Vanessche interview

*Jo Van Den Berghe*

Jan-Jan Vanessche is a fashion designer who graduated from the Antwerp Fashion Academy and who operates from Antwerp in Belgium. He teaches fashion design at the Fashion Academy in Antwerp and in Den Haag in The Netherlands. Jan-Jan Vanessche runs the Solar Shop, an international design collective based in Antwerp, Belgium

The interview has been done during the preparation and the celebration of a gorgeous meal in the fashion design studio of the fashion designer in Antwerp in 2014, together with his collaborators, who have willingly participated in the interview conversation.

JJVE: Jan-Jan Vanessche (fashion designer)

PC: Pietro Celestina (assistant fashion designer)

Charlotte (assistant fashion designer)

IVK: Ingrid Van Kerkhove (external manufacture workshop owner)

*Jo Van Den Berghe*

This interview is about questioning creative people about how to become more aware of their creative processes in order to see if we can gain more insights into these processes. The interview is also meant to find out if e.g. fashion designers can learn something from other creative disciplines. People, tools and conversations are the main themes.

*PC: ... there are still potatoes in the oven...*

As we can enjoy the meal with you all (Pietro and Charlotte work together with Jan-Jan), I suggest that everybody around this table participates if he or she wants to. It's all right with me.

*JJVE: I like the themes.*

*PC: Indeed, Jan-Jan.*

*JJVE: Concerning People, Anne Flaten Pixley, the lady from the Camargue I was talking about the other day, is super inspiring because whether she talks about food or textile (she was teaching housewives at that time) or about top art... Within these different fields of interest she has a 'master' once in her life, and you can feel that she has been doing these things for years this 'from the belly', with her whole body and soul, and she is still doing so. She is still that eager and that is why she is still a big example for me.*

*PC: Also for me, she is aware of an emergency of time at her age...*

*JJVE: At her age she says: "I will do that" whereas at my age I say "I still have to do this one day". She says "I will make this plate, I will visit this place". She is also profound in her research, I mean if she is reading something, she will order five books at once about it at Ammazon.com. She really knows something about a subject whereas I look up something in one book looking at a picture and making conclusions, rather than reading. Of course, everyone has his way to look up something, but she is an example. Also, she gives a kind of recognition of what you are doing, a kind of 'you are on your way', even if you are just beginning. Recognition of collaborators in your workshop is very valuable but can feel a bit 'worn' because you are always working with them, it is not that...*

*PC: ... motivating?*

*JJVE: Motivating indeed.*

Confirmation upon confirmations ...

*JJVE: It is a recognition indeed to get comments from this kind of person. Another example of such a person is the Italian designer I met two years ago: Maurizio Altieri, a real diehard who never has had a cult label between about 1995 and 2000. A lot of designers still*

*produce bad copies*

*PC: Just copies, not always bad.*

*JJVE: Maybe, but sometimes not inspired. We were in his apartment where he designed really every detail. As he cannot stand round wholes, all the light switches and basins are square.*

*PC: He created his own universe.*

*JJVE: We did that too in our apartment but we did not adapt everything as we intended to do, even if it keeps bothering me every day. Maurizio rented his apartment. Triple sockets protrude from the surface of the wall. There is an electrical connection in the wall that has been plastered away subsequently. The warrant money cannot be paid back that way. A former apartment he was expected to restyle as a fashion designer. In Italy they might expect 'gold' or so, but he completely stripped it down up to wooden beams and concrete walls. Of course he was kicked out with legal charges, but he doesn't mind.*

*I find this inspiring. He enters my showroom and takes the coat's seam that is not stitched that right... He pushes on pain points but I appreciate this. It makes me aware.*

*Somehow I already knew, but, this is fantastic in fact, these comments are helpful for you to never forget to make mistakes like that in the future.*

Has this person changed you? Did this appointment change you?

*PC: It is motivating because comments of these people, far away from commercial stuff, are based upon their own experience. He already has been working this way.*

*JJVE: Moreover, he is one of the biggest players in his field, in fact he is working without compromises and in fact he is too rigid, he was earning nearly no money at all, I'm sure he must have had financial support from a 'maecenas'.*

He had a rich father perhaps?

*JJVE: I don't know: he does not need much money. But of course, having hundreds of fans may help. If you are in Paris during the fashion week, you see people adoring him, rather ridiculous, but I was familiar with his work before I have known him or his reputation. I think this is the key why he likes us, because we do not crave for him. I would not say he has changed me, it is rather a confirmation of the things I did, of keeping on doing things the way I did, of persisting.*

*Anne is working the same way as Maurizio but in a much milder way, less macho, less Italian, less punk. She is rather a kind Nordic hippy. It was nice meeting these similar people with different characters within a rather short time span. Anne is more gentle, also very critical, but she likes the funny thing about it rather than showing disgust.*

Hm. Punk ?

*PC: It seems like, as time goes by, the periods in which we meet these people, appear more often and that is fine.*

*JJVE: The thing I like about it is that the more I am working at it, I mean the last two collections in Paris felt satisfying at the end, just good. About my former collections I thought more like: "What the hell have I done with this or that piece from the collection?"*

(laughing with recognition)

*JJVE: While making a collection as a designer, you have the feeling you never reached the point you wanted to reach, whereas this time I thought, this piece can be launched into the world and I felt more satisfied.*

*Through working long hours on a collection things becomes more clear, like for the last two collections in Paris, I thought: this one is good. I really appreciate*

*this collection. Before, I had the feeling not to have been ready. This time I was thinking: this should be shown to the world. The whole team, not only me, felt calmer. Since we also meet more people who, just by being there, show how they feel what you feel.*

Yes!

*PC: It happens that you meet them by accident ...*

*JJVE: ... and that is fantastic. Before I was afraid of going to Paris, I did not want to go to Paris, I wanted to show my collection in Antwerp. I did not like the pumped-up fashion design week in Paris. But it is possible to live a kind of parallel alternative week in Paris. There are indeed very interesting people. Concerning the material, the fabric, I like to use the fabrics that are available. The limitation of materials can be an inspiring factor, to re-use fabrics for patchworks and for hand woven fabrics.*

*These days I am looking forward to Paris, if I do not take into account the stress of deadlines, also for meeting the owners of the shops and boutiques. And the people who are shopping. They can be fantastic too, their feedback is always very valuable. Because, as a designer, you come out only once every season let's say, in January and June.*

So next time is January ...

*JJVE: Yes, but this is very hard work, also for the apprentices in my studio, my mother...*

*PC: And the manufacture workshops, where the production takes place ...*

*JJVE: Yes but without them there would be no collection at all ...*

*The manufacture workshops make things more*

*obvious, things are changing and getting forward. Their input is indispensable.*

You were talking about things becoming more clear and obvious. What is the reason, is there a 'pattern'?

*JJVE: I think it is experience, getting used to it, having less stress. Also in the process of designing you become more self-confident. I still have doubts, but not any longer on the fact whether I am a designer or not. Before I did not know myself and I was uncertain about what I was doing. I do not have that feeling any more.*

It is a sort of a calibration process?

*JJVE: Yes, and the better the design, the better you learn to launch it business wise..*

*Because it feels more 'right', it fits better into your primary intention. For this reason your production process becomes more easy, it all comes together.*

*PC: You also become more familiar with the manufacture workshops, fabric makers, shops. This contributes to the necessary knowledge.*

*JJVE: Buying fabrics nowadays has become easier, there is that confidence, they know what you want just by doing it and meeting more often. But there still is the stress of the next collection. We helped ourselves by making only one collection a year the first three years, which enabled us to provide time to make mistakes. These mistakes could be corrected, while nowadays, there is less time and space for mistakes ...*

*PC: The reasons for mistakes can be lack of anticipation, canceling of fabrics deliveries, mistakes in the design, in the production, new input coming from the production process that imposes changes in the design itself*

...

*JJVE: ... a showroom that was cancelled. Even when you are becoming very experienced things like that keep popping up ...*

*JVDB: ... there is nothing to do about that, that is the external machinery...*

*JJVE: ... as a fashion designer, maybe comparable to an architect, you have to wait for fabrics that have to arrive on time because the 'making time' is scheduled in the manufacture workshop; the manufacture workshop has to make it in time because the photo-session has to start because the pictures have to be ready for the catalog. As a designer, you have to deliver and produce all the time for the next step to happen, and then when receive the result you have to control it... You depend on so many external factors that you really need the feeling of being in control, of anticipating, or you just become crazy.*

*JVDB: And suddenly, somewhere things go wrong. This is the logistic part of the job, but there is also the more fundamental part of it, where creation emerges ... These anxious doubts can be more compelling ....*

*JJVE: Yes, and in the current fashion season I permanently have this feeling. I am developing this collection, 'stealing' design hours here and there, for an hour, for half an hour, a little bit of this, a little bit of that... this is an awful feeling. For more than one month, I cannot immerse myself in the matter by means of creativity. I am making separate things, good on their own, but the pieces will again have to 'fall' together into a consistent collection. These kind of deadlines are somehow less stressful because I do not depend on other stakeholders. External deadlines are more threatening for the ideas of the designer. So I first have to deal with them, and then the good idea will have to wait until night hours where sometimes it unfortunately disappears.*

*Charlotte: But you know, if the main stream of ideas is ok,...*



So a purely practical problem becomes a fundamental problem because something of the practical layer intrudes the fundamental layer...

*JJVE: And so the most important aspects are getting the least priority ...*

I recognize this all too well as an architect.

*JJVE: Because we are basically two persons who do the follow-up. Instead of designing, I have to do the follow-up of the production more and more. I have to be very vigilant about that!*

*Charlotte: If we could pay someone for doing this job, it would change the thing.*

*JJVE: This is the first thing that has to be done: to engage someone for the supervision of the production. This will enable me to activate my creative process. I am used to work in a very intuitive way. Although I design in a considerate way, my first drawings are literally 'écriture automatique', just having fun with silhouettes, stains ... Afterwards I start to analyze it because I think my design should be a part of myself.*

This is a very important quote.

*JJVE: This is the only thing I even do not consider, I believe it. I make sketches of silhouettes for three days, hundreds of them, very quickly, without thinking about material, length, only positions and postures, atmospheres, good images. Afterwards I try to find the connection that runs through it all, the core of consistency. That is the most pleasant part of the process. If I could do this all day long ...*

This is the first part of the process?

*JJVE: Yes, afterwards the designs become more practical, 'boring'. First there is the sketch, then a technical drawing, then a pattern, then a prototype in fabric I*

*make here together with the apprentices. Afterwards it becomes a collection prototype made by the manufacture workshop. That piece goes to the showroom and from that moment, it becomes a dangerous devil and all the fun has gone.*

*The prototype from the showroom comes back in, and then comes the question: how many pieces are ordered, how many meters of fabric do I have to order? Do I have all the buttons? Do I have enough labels? This process occupies my time between June and October. So I still do many other things than designing alone. My designing process is situated within my production process. Both processes are interwoven.*

What would be the alternative?

*Someone taking over the production process from the showroom, someone who knows the prototypes because he has to understand the pieces in the collection. I do this by myself, Pietro is starting to help me but I do the major part. Pietro deals with the part of the fabrics, and I do the supervision of the technical aspects: the patterns, the technical drawings, the division of the fabrics towards the different manufacturers, ... which takes a full week of puzzling. We can only do half of this work package because the other half of the fabric first has to be sent to the dying manufactory. I don't sleep then because of those half packages. "Did I order fabric for these two black shirts?"*

*Big companies order six or seven rolls of one fabric to be sure, but for financial reasons I usually order one roll and cut e.g. twenty meters for this manufacturer, etc. ... Working this way can cause mistakes.*

*Charlotte: But maybe if you order big amounts of fabric, there is the risk of losing more money when it goes wrong.*

*JJVE: Yes, but computer software can make exact*

*calculations.*

That exactly can go wrong t ... ?

*JJVE: Right ...*

You described the practical contamination of a creative process that started as very pure. Can the practical aspects of the process also inspire the creative process in a positive way?

*JJVE: Yes, up to the showroom prototypes it is inspiring. I find making patterns as inspiring as the pure designing process. The pockets I make here ...*

*PC: ... very exceptionally!*

*JJVE: ... yes, but this constitutes the identification of my clothing as it is now. The inside is more beautiful than the outside. The construction is unique, I am proud of it. That pocket must not be complicated. But the fact not to work with standard pockets of manufacturers ... I get a kick on developing a new sort of cuff, sleeve slit. If I would put the button of these trousers in a shirt, what is the consequence and how will be the finishing ? This is the job of the apprentices. They do the try-outs and they come back to me with the eventual technical problems. For instance: how the hell can we stitch this in a way it is still open? Sometimes I put that piece aside for three days thinking about it. But this is my research and developing process.*

*PC: A lot of designers cannot stitch well. They produce an idea and give it to someone else to develop and make it . Jan-Jan does this himself and he becomes better by doing it, informed by the knowledge of making. This process is valuable but it takes away time from something else in the process.*

*JJVE: I could say: "I do not make patterns any more, I give the technical drawing to the manufacturer who*

*will make the pattern. But you cannot control this. I restyled T-shirts because my raglan sleeve absolutely had to be in a 45 degree position. This is the most important thing in my clothing: one must be able to move within it! Wearing it in a comfortable way. People wearing it have to feel free. It is fantastic that in my last two collections shop owners say to me: I feel greatly relieved. Then I say: that is exactly what I want!*

The ultimate mastery of the technics lead to this of course!

*JJVE: But I still didn't arrive to the point I want to, and often I have been doing interesting things and then I do them again and again ...*

*IVK: From the point of view of the manufacturer, I thought that your design starts from the pattern itself that you are developing all the time. I was not aware of those steps before, the drawings.*

*JJVE: The drawings give an image of the attitude of the collection, what is the length, the space volume of the clothing, in fact I had to skip this in the conversations that we have and that proceed the production itself because of the time pressure.*

*Charlotte: You already chose a final model out of the preliminary sketches before you start the communication with the manufacturer.*

*JJVE: 70 % of the sketch ideas is not used at all.*

*I show you some drawings: they are made very quickly, from the belly, almost without 'thinking'..*

What is the material you make these drawings with? What are your tools?

*JJVE: Pencil, pen, ink, a glass pen, a fatty, greasy*

*charcoal-like pencil. My material depends on the collection, the things I would like to work with at that moment. Drawings mostly start vague, like this (shows a drawing). That process takes about one week, this set of drawings took three days.*

Intense work!

*JJVE: This is fun for me. I mostly first draw the models that I dress afterwards. But this jacket has been drawn at the same time with the model.*

Do you make drawings here in your studio, or everywhere?

*JJVE: These small models I draw in the airplane, with a ballpoint. I have been drawing my most recent collection on the flight from Rome to Antwerp. I do not care if anyone is watching, people do not understand what I am doing. I am not afraid of people stealing my ideas. If you glance at this, you get another idea out of it than I do anyway.*

And these drawings are all archived ?

*JJVE: Yes, (laughing) I hope to find them back ... I also draw in the train if it is not for work, a sort of relaxation. I use tools, I have some pens, it can take one or two collections to 'loosen'. A ballpoint is fantastic, always greasy enough.*

Is a fountain pen that is often used better than a ball-point?

*JJVE: Yes, but I like the combination. I make always copies of the drawings and work on them. With these copies I pin derived silhouettes or pieces of silhouettes of these originals on a blackboard. Then I start with the technical drawings, 'drawings' at first. In these drawings a shirt might not be distinguished from a jacket, one layer not from two layers, and all these small attempts and*

*steps gradually form a consistent collection. Small pieces of fabrics are crossing over these drawings all the time.*

Are you also teaching these procedures? What is your teaching about?

*JJVE: It is about things like: find out whether you like to draw with a ballpoint or with water-color. I like to make the students express what exactly they want to talk about, why they choose fashion education in the first place. . I am teaching in the first year and this question is more relevant in the fourth year, but first year students do have to know that they have to think about this.. Some students are not aware of it at all. This school system is new this year in Den Haag, and it has been introduced by the Antwerp Academy earlier. Some teachers from Antwerp started twelve years ago in Den Haag. Teachers from Belgium often work there.*

Why would that be? This is not only the case in fashion. Belgian architects are also very in the mood in the Netherlands nowadays ...

*JJVE: This might be a consequence of the student revolution in the sixties. Students demanded participation and so they almost became colleagues of their teachers. In the Netherlands, the mentality that 'if only the idea about how to work is ok, if the goal of education is ok, if only teachers are nice people', that everything is ok. In Belgium your work is estimated on its own, 'is the work itself valuable or not?' I am making a pastiche of both cases here, but this might explain the roots of the working ethos now. Students in Belgium did benefit from less participation than in Holland. We address our teacher more often as 'sir' or 'professor' whereas in the Netherlands students call professors by their names. On the one hand it is a more familiar, more human, sociable way to work—what I missed in the Antwerp Academy—but on the other hand—and I was not aware at the beginning—there is not enough 'professional' engagement by the students if their behaviour becomes too loose.*

*Charlotte: It is interesting but difficult to get discipline and rigour without terror ...*

*JJVE: But terror never works in the long run ...*

*Charlotte: But is an interesting question how to get into this rigorous mode with students anyway; how the teaching system can make you work hard without creating fear.*

*PC: Separating the corn from the chaff ...*

*JJVE: This is only working for American universities, where you compose your own program, where there is more interference with teachers, but where the level of output is very high. You are responsible yourself for the package you compose yourself. In that case it is possible. But young students who still don't have that level first have to learn about the requested minimum level of the education. I won't mention their reactions, from anger to adoration. The requested level is obvious in fashion shows, magazines, in the demonstrated fashion and education practices of the professors themselves ... In this case students choose a school according to their self-created expectations. In Antwerp, this kind of expectation is known as 'terror'. People think it is impossible to finish this program whereas each year ten people graduate. I would really like to implement this level without 'terrorizing'. It is a difficult job within the Dutch school culture.*

*For instance, I asked the students to finish eight silhouettes from ten (it was a collection of ten pieces) of which two pieces in fabric. The reaction of one student was: "... but if I finish four pieces and a very good explanation ..."*

*Charlotte: But it is possible to be clear without using a kind of terror, you can say Jan-Jan ...*

*JJVE: I know, and this is what I keep doing, but I do not get anywhere with a too loose way of working. I*

*have to lose control in front of the class sometimes and I have to say: "I'm sorry, but this is crap". Sometimes you have to be strict and generate some fear in order to make the students move and make progress!.... I first try to say it seventeen times in a friendly way, and if this does not generate any change then I say it one time in an angry way. It takes rigor and discipline to do the right job. Last year they said "we didn't know Jan-Jan could act this way" but I then say "you urge me to do so!". And this was not earlier than in April. There is a sort of lax discipline in that school that has to be changed.*

Does it exist: top quality without 'barking' ?

*JJVE: I don't think so, I doubt it ...*

Functional barking, not on the person, or stroking and beating simultaneously...

*JJVE: No, not striking physically of course. But I have to say: "this is not good, what did you do all that time? You come in with five drawings, you made this in a couple of hours yesterday evening ... I come all the way from Antwerp to help you and you quickly made some drawings yesterday. If you leave, I can spend more time to the students who want to be here. Sometimes you have to 'shake and awake' them!"*

*Charlotte: But you can focus on the deplorable level of the work without intimidating and depreciating the person ...*

*JJVE: Indeed, I can focus on someone's (bad) work, but when I see that this student starts to cry I stay with him or her until he or she is calm again, don't take this personally. You start anointing again, I do not want to intimidate at all!*

*JJVE: But I can get angry, I didn't get up at five o'clock in the morning to travel from Antwerp to Den Haag just to see drawings in other sequences with*



*another big explanation... than I get prickly. My language turns into Antwerp slang because I am speaking from my body and soul at that moment. There is also time pressure: ten minutes per student, it is a big responsibility. I use this time as good as possible for every person to become a good designer.*

*PC: They see the fashion academy a very romantic place ... working hard is rather confronting ...*

*JJVE: But the best thing I can do is repeating this question: 'why?' Why? Why does one do what he or she does? Repeating this question also to myself, without forgetting to smile?*

*PC: This is not easy ...*

*JJVE: No, but do not say to me that clothing is a way to express ... because this is too obvious as a motivation! Rather I would like the student to say what (!) he or she wants to express? Not the usual "I want to express myself", but the deeper dimensions of what that students wants to say to the world. And my students have to inquire this maturity during the first year. No one can pass the first year if he or she does not even know the beginning of what he or she wants to be.*

*Charlotte and PC: This is not easy because ...*

*JJVE: ... but there can be an evolution. This is High School!*

And you have to say things in a direct way when you only have ten minutes.

*JJVE: Last week I made someone cry because I asked her if he knew Rudolf Steiner? She said, crying: "I was in a Steiner School for 15 years." I replied: "Yes, I can see it, so did I." The last thing I said was important for her to hear, in order not to cry anymore. But her drawings looked like those of a little child of the Steiner School, I*

*even recognize the label of color pencils. I suggested her to draw some weeks with black and grey pencils, just 'dry' drawings, and it helped! She made collages with it... but I hated the flue blue back-ground of her drawings. I do recognize it miles away. I said "ok if you want to, but it is not up to date." Doing so I could explain that it is not evident to show such a collection in Paris, to show something new to the world, and maybe it's exactly this what the world is expecting from us ...*

*Charlotte: (laughing) Have a try, it is a challenge ...*

*JJVE: I said that this seems very difficult to me. And then I made a joke and offered her a cup of coffee, and the crying was over. Then my student starts to understand that this is very interesting.*

I do recognize everything, really, like if it is teaching at school of architecture.

*PC: How many years do you teach architectural design?*

More than 10 years.

*JJVE: It is very beautiful, the students among themselves and that atmosphere in the corridors. For example there was a student who did the fourth year two times and I can say that I have helped him because his power was not obvious but I found the key, maybe because I am a younger teacher so that he felt more familiar and maybe, as he was very detached, I am very open and communicative. He even won an award in the Netherlands as the best graduated student after that fourth year. Now he has completely changed and became very professional while we had thought it would never work at a certain moment ...*

*To witness this intellectual change is glorious.*

*I am very happy I can do this job and it has always  
been my dream.*

## 1.3 Who creates and what is created? Dialogues with Akira Kasai and Siv Helene Stangeland

*Valentina Signore*

*Who creates and what is created? The one who does create cannot solve this dilemma.*

*In the beginning there was only Chaos. Then out of the void appeared Erebus the unknowable place where death and Night dwells. All else was empty, silent, endless, dark. Then, Eros was born bringing along the beginning of order...*

(Greek Creation Myth)

In the Greek mythology of Creation Chaos is at the first place, but before order can start to appear, another unknowable, dark and mysterious entity emerges from the void. It seems that we cannot create or even speak about creation if we don't have a kind of encounter with such unknown places.

In my experience what I recall as a veritable moment of creation is a butoh dance performance I did in Sardinia in 2010. At a certain moment I laid down on a street of the village of San Sperate, six other dancers lifted my body and moved it to another spot I didn't know of. Then my 15' improvisation had to start. I had promised myself not to do one single movement that was unnecessary and just to openly wait for something real to happen that would have started my dance. If not, I was ready to lay down still for 15' in front of a public who expected a dance, or at least some kind of movement. While I was displaced through the air, I opened all my body, senses and heart to the unknown, sure to encounter something on the ground that would have started my dance. But when I touched the ground in my field of view only white walls and the blue sky appeared. Nothing happened: my body was lost in that white void, exposed to the eyes of the public. My heart became a battlefield of fears and desires. Then a leaf moved by the wind came toward me and moved me inside: a dance able to listen, to welcome and to flow

with the emerging presences of each instant had started.

In the last eight years, while working mainly as researcher in academia, I have been studying and practicing intensively architecture as well as butoh dance. No matter the medium - if I am drawing, improvising a dance or writing an essay- I am in search for that special moment of “things” happening by themselves. It can be a sketch on paper, a movement, a concept, that starts to emerge, then I try just to listen and follow it, until it manifests itself as necessary while I find myself becoming anew. The decision to write about creativity went along with the choice to interview two people that I met along my paths in these different fields and whose work resonates with my own search for creation: Akira Kasai, a butoh dancer and choreographer- and an architect - Siv Helene Stangeland. While the two conversations took different paths, my curiosity came back to their role as “authors” of their creations, to the place that they occupy in the process: how do they keep real their encounter with the unknown, while they have developed a mastery in their field? Looking back and across the two interviews, it is apparent how an existential search underlies their creative paths. At the same time, they approached my questions in a completely different way: Siv seems to reveal her “secrets” while Akira, turns my questions back toward me. Such a difference is maybe the most interesting outcome of this operation. It opens the question about the very purpose about writing and reflecting about creativity. Certainly it does bring some important insights, however, Akira, almost refusing to directly reply, seems to point directly to the main risk to translate what we learn into formulas, as in a veritable creative act the whole life of a person is at stake.

The silences were with no doubts the most beautiful and intense moments of both the conversations. It is difficult to translate them in the written text, I hope the reader will hear their echoes in the intensity and truthfulness of their spoken words.

## 1.4 Interview with Siv Helene Stangeland

**Siv Helene Stangeland** was born in Stavanger, Norway 1966. She studied French and art in Bordeaux one year before starting her studies in AHO Oslo (The Oslo School of Architecture and Design) under Sverre Fehn and Christian Norberg Schultz, where she graduated in 1996. She decided to become architect in Barcelona, where she followed classes at the Technical University ETSAB and at the art school of Massana. Back at AHO in 1992 she met Reinhard Kropf, who became since then her partner in life and work. They formally established the firm Helen&Hard in 1996, following their Diplomas. She has completed supervision education based on psychosynthesis and Gestalt theory, she is currently involved in the ADAPT-r program. The Interview was made via Skype in July 2014. I was in Brussels and Siv in Stavanger.

*Valentina Signore*

I would like to know what you understand as ‘creating’ and what is your own way of creating. Maybe there is a project where you find most apparent your own way of creating.

*Siv Helene Stangeland*

*I think that my awareness of creativity, of its cultivation, and my relation to it, have changed very much through the years. There is an evolution in that sense.*

*Thus it is not easy to choose one project, but I can recall the very first project Reinhard and I did (Herring Sea House restaurant, Stavanger, 1995). We just came from school and we were a kind of students thrown into a more complex reality. And there it happened a kind of discovery: that this more complex reality is more similar to what I recall as a playful creativity being a child, when I was creative with whatever happened around me and with whatever I could play with around me.*

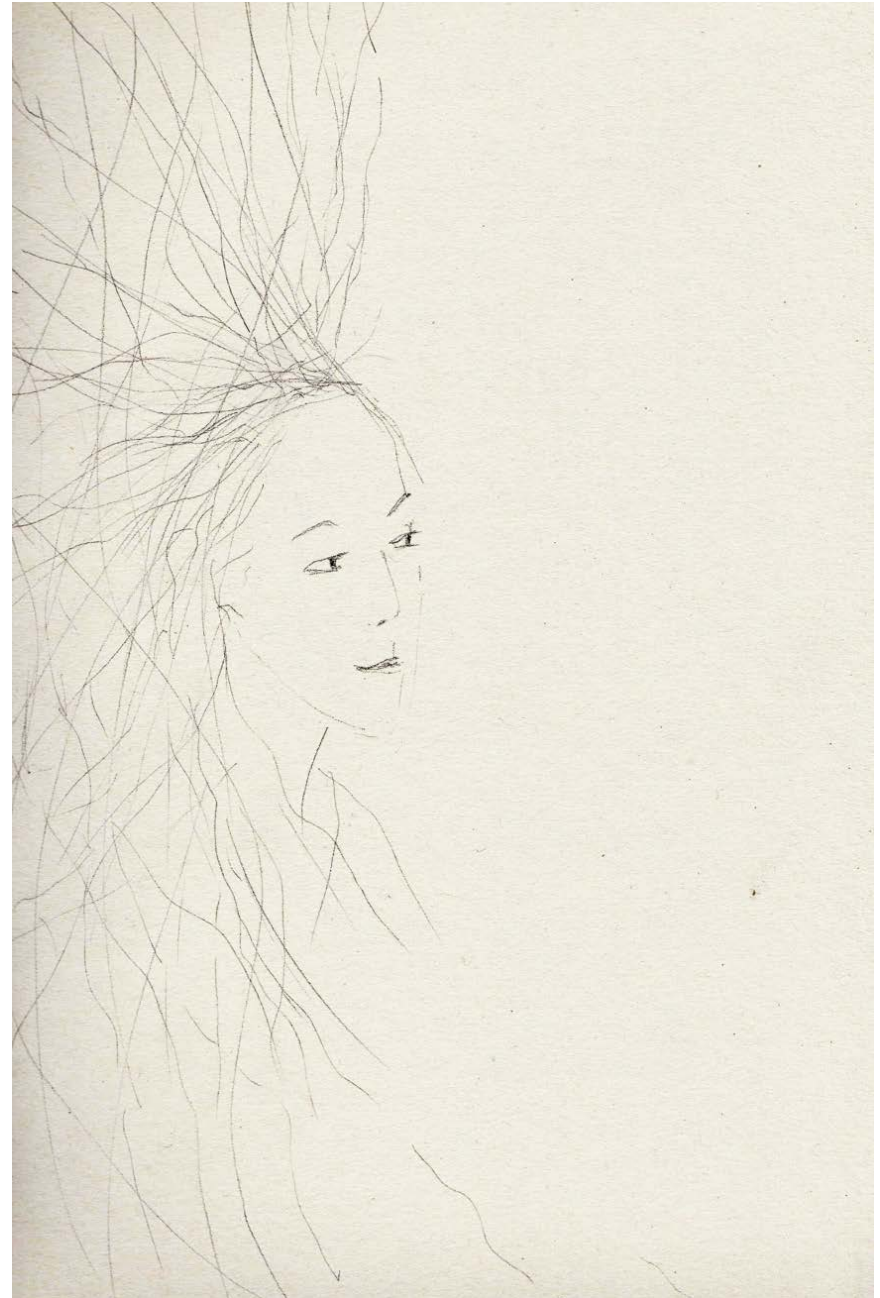
*At that time we were living and working in an old vernacular sea house where we were supposed to design a restaurant. And I can remember clearly that we started of being very much ‘architects’: trying to have concepts about how to add this new layer of a Mexican restaurant into a sea-house. And then, little by little, we were so much immersed into this old fantastic house – a part of*

*it is from the XVI Century– and we were excavating and finding things as the renovation went by. So we lost quite early these kind of concepts that we had learned at school, such as ‘how you juxtapose new and old’, and everything should be very clearly separated and articulated. I remember the day when we threw them away! We were much more into finding things, revealing old stuff that no one had seen before, because covered with layers of transformation. And in this discovering, or taking apart things, we got in a very close contact with the timber structure, with the smell of the place, with the history that came to us through these layers. We entered in a kind of dialogue with that house: and the house started to speak to us about what was the right thing to do. Or in other words, we started to find something that we could do ‘together with the house’. That is what I would call a kind co-creative state of mind: when things started to kick back to us, and we are not getting anywhere with our preconceptions anymore. But in that period of time this was not very conscious, it just happened. Only afterwards I could reflect upon it. Now we have to leave what we’ve learned, we have to find a solution through making it and without putting something on it.*

So the project you just described has given a sort of imprinting to your way of creating. Though such a “co-creative state of mind” arose at that time by chance, dismantling your certitudes as students. But how did it evolve into something more conscious? I wonder if the concept of “Relational Design” that you have developed comes as a result of this awareness.

*Yes, at that time it was not a method. It is something that has been developing over time, reading theories and making new projects. But I can remember that I could recognize this feeling of ‘becoming one’ with what we were doing, of listening what is happening between me or us and the place. This is very similar to playing, as I recall it from my childhood. Loosing myself into something and becoming one with what I am doing. This is not completely new, but of course it is getting another, a*

Figure 1.4  
Siv Helene  
Stangeland  
(by Valentina  
Signore).





*professional context to it. Moreover, later we used it more as a method. As a method we called it 'walk the land', because when we start a project we try to 'sensitize' for the place and the context by being there, walking there, and studying things, and a similar dialogue occurs...*

*...a kind of experience of entering a conversation with the place.*

I would like to know more about this method. And I find it fascinating the idea of a method able to re-create every time this sort of magic moment of things happening by themselves, without putting too much your intentions and pre-conceptions on them. But then the question is how can you maintain this openness and at the same time develop mastery? How can you keep in a method a real openness?

*Some methods have to do with entering into a sensitive state, which can be just being in a place for a long period. We were using film as a medium, because filming makes it possible to just be there without selecting anything, and we could retreat and select afterwards, and discover things by selecting again. In a period of time we were using it quite a lot. Then there were also moments in which we were more interested in gathering things from the place. Because just having complex or diverse fragments of materials, of stories or phenomenas that had to do with the project gathered on a table, then things that we could not foresee started to happen between them. We called it the 'full table' or 'stack table'.*

*Then we were becoming much more aware that we could design processes where people engaged. People that were somehow related to the project, as future users or other resources, around the project, the clients, people around the clients, that they could be also part of this self-organizing process. And we became very much obsessed with self-organizing processes, to an extent that we were almost extinguishing our own design. In some*

*period of time we didn't want to touch the drawing, to design something purposely. We wanted just something to emerge by itself. Of course it went along with reading emergent theories and so on. Both reading and learning something and then testing it out in our context. So that was a whole branch, just these participatory processes, or even with neighbours, children, artists.*

*And then we also went along with this methods of finding things, instead of designing things. It became a kind of methods as well. We were finding things in the industries in our own town. We could transfer not only objects but also skills and production methods. I would say that this is also a kind of development of the same motivation to be in dialogue with what is there and let these resources generate together with us the architecture and the project.*

*...What more?... And then, there is also a becoming aware of this double necessity: from one hand Reinhard and me having a kind of design control, the will to be 'something', and on the other hand seeking for the emergent properties, to make things happen. It has been of course a continuous tension. But we became more and more aware that both of these aspects are important. We have to enhance and elaborate our own self assertive quality or skill, along this other emergent property that we want to happen.*

*In this sense I think that my drawing practice has been a method for me, when I kind of enclose the creative process to me and something. It has been very much through drawing that it has happened. It is also through meditation practice that I have been becoming aware of what is happening when I am creating with a medium. Just myself. And this is interesting because it was a way of also seeing and accepting that my individual contribution is also very important. Because at a certain moment we were nearly 'losing our own territories' because we were so much involving other people and other process to happen.*

I was just thinking how the tension you just described is visible in your work: I feel the openness but at the same time I do “see” you. You are not invisible at all, but it is true that I don’t see your ‘ego’. I wonder: where do we exactly find you as the “author” of your works? You mentioned drawing and meditation as two moments where you are more in contact with your own position in the design process. I would like to understand more in what sense these moments help you to find your own role and position in this openness.

*I think there is a link between becoming aware of something and creativity. And these two things are very close to each other.*

*I’m just noticing that sketching is a kind of circular movement where I start with an underlay, then I put a transparent paper on it. And I draw again. And it is never the same of what is underneath. There is always a small variation that is about seeing a possibility and then, looking at it, I become aware of that difference. And nearly at the same time, as I see there is a movement or a change I get the impulse to go further in that direction. And this is the kind of the same that happens when I become aware of something: I see something, I can recognize it and then I let it go because I want to let new things happen.*

*It’s daring to put forward something that I don’t know what it is. And then looking at it, seeing what it is, recognize it as something, and then leaving it again to put another layer that is always a search for something that I don’t know what it is.*

*And this normally happens within a certain time. It is a kind of circular movement that can take one hour. During that hour there is always something happening that I can use. But there has to be always that time frame. It is not something that can happen in two*

*minutes, it has to unfold for a period of time and in the end there is something there that has a quality.*

It seems that what you do in your projects is exactly what you do with yourself. The kind of listening you have with a project you have it with yourself while you draw.

*Yes exactly, but here I use a simple medium that is drawing. One could say that it is something similar to when I am meditating. Using my breath. It is a medium where I can reflect on where I am in relation to that medium. No matter if it is the drawing in the design or the breath in the meditation, it is a bit the same what is happening.*

I would like to point to another aspect in the tension you described before. Hearing about openness one may think that there is no place for strong aims or for clear goals. But they are not absent from your work: you explicitly name something that you point at in any project, beyond its specific reality. I quote you “We aim to creatively engage with sustainability, not only in the design of spaces, but also in the conception and organization of the design process, including construction and fabrication. Our goal is move away from a solely technical and anthropocentric view, allowing the project to unfold in relation to its environmental, social, cultural and economic context”

*We understand Sustainability in a holistic sense, which means that it is not only about energy efficiency and counting our CO<sub>2</sub> footprint. But it is much more about how we go along with all our resources, our communal resources, individual resources, and global resources. These three levels are essential to us. It means that it is as important as we work together: we have to be happy with what we do. And we have to ask ourselves big existential questions, such Why are doing this? What is the contribution to this? Ours is a holistic project. I*

*think we can learn a lot from nature in this respect. We read a lot about biology and system theory, because Nature is working in systems and wholes all the time. And there we can find often beautiful examples about how to do that in our processes. So the Sustainability is also about exactly this notion of being able to 'grow' new things. I use grow consciously because I think that our creativity is very much based on growing things, is not something jumping out from somewhere. But it is something growing out of a relational dynamic process... with feedback loops, which is also something happening in nature, it is something also that we want to have, as in nature, because we think it is a way of adjusting a project so that it is not only our own belief or agenda but by testing it on the way it gets redundant and resilient. The quality that it needs to survive and to make it a meaningful answer for the situation, not only to ourselves. So that is the notion of growing. The idea of growing architecture is also a part of our sustainable understanding.*

The word 'create' is related with the latin 'crescere' that means to grow. Growing, connects to the idea of life which is not always so evident in Architecture, considered something stable and still. You refer to this growth mainly to the process that leads to the creation of a project, including the working atmosphere, the existential questions that animate the process. What about the life of your projects after your design process? What happens after your projects are built? Is there in your work an attempt to say "design life", in a long term perspective? As growing a child you cannot predict what will really happen. Is this part of your preoccupation as an architect? Is there any project where you especially tackled this aspect?

*There are some projects, especially one in particular where, intentionally or in the most precise way, we have kind of included "life" after our work. Which was the*

*Norwegian Pavilion for the Shanghai expo (China, 2010).*

*Although the funny thing is that in this case we have never got to see what really happened to it after the expo! But the design was conceived so that after the expo it could continue to have a life with the future users. Our idea was in fact to involve the future users already while we were developing the project. And it was meant to be a part of the exhibition. However it didn't happen because the bureaucracy around an expo is too complex and the Norwegian State didn't want to handle on it. We did a structure which had some layers on it, where the outer layer could be manipulated. Since it couldn't be the future users, we showed that it is possible to make a structure that can have that adaptability through it, not only in the design process itself but also afterwards. Then there are other examples. Like the Library in Vennesla (Norway, 2011), that is a kind of finished work from our part. But we have visited it several times and we see that the users go on finding new ways of occupying it. Not only the physical furniture, but also the building as a whole for other uses than we planned. It is used for weddings, communal activities, which is unexpected for us. That is beautiful! That's how it should be!*

While you speak I have always the feeling that the main quality of your way of creating is not only a matter of job, of making architecture, but it is more connected to a way of being and of living. Life and architecture are not that easily separable. When you describe your partnership with Reinhard you say: "I guess that what sustain our partnership is a shared philosophy of understanding both life and architecture as a continuous co-creation". I would like to know more about this connection, about your philosophy of life that is beyond your philosophy of architecture.

...

*I think about this very strong experience from childhood. From the creative play, and the intensity and feeling of power that this ability to enter a kind of enchanted state where everything is possible and you co-create what is happening all the time.*

*There has always been an urge to understand more. I have been reading, trying to find literature and people who have similar experiences and put other words on it. And I've found Freya Mathews who is an eco-philosopher. She is also referring to Australian aborigines and how they relate to nature. They have this way of walking where they are entering into conversations with the place and they change also themselves in this practice. I think that it was very precise to my own experience... It touched me to know that it was part of their culture to practice this as their way to relate to their surroundings. And she has also developed a whole philosophy around the possibility of having another relation to our reality which is co-creative. She bases it on different ancient philosophers, naming it a 'PAN Philosophy'. She refers to Eros and Psyche, saying that it is possible to have an erotic relationship with our surroundings even today. Even though we don't live in nature, we can recall this way of being. Of course this is the reaction to a mechanist world view. And then, from her, I went on reading about cognitive science. I was interested in how the mind works. Also because I am meditating and I wanted to understand what was really going on. Francisco Varela has co-written a beautiful book about becoming aware, where I found exactly this description of what is going on. And he has also developed theories about co-developed horizons of our reality. Reality is not something 'out there' that we are discovering, but it is somewhere here that we are co-creating. Reality is a co-creation. I believe strongly in that.*

You mentioned philosophers and thinkers influencing you. Is there anybody else or anything else that is significant for you? An experience, a place a meeting a person,

something or somebody that is particularly significant?

*Of course Reinhard is a very significant person. I think that the most important thing that we share is the philosophy of life and it is something that we always can nurture each other with, it gives us a perspective on what we are doing. This level of communicating is essential for us. To be able to be creative together. Although we are interested in different things and philosophers, and we like different things, there has always been an existential conversation going on. That is essential both for the creation and for the relationships.*

I see how in the identity of your practice there is already the openness that you seek in your work. In H&H there is already a plurality, a relation, an openness in its own nature. Do you think that this capacity to be open is linked also to the fact that you are one and two at the same time? And how does it concretely work? And again, in this partnership, can you point at something that identifies more your own role and your own position?

*I think that what you say is true. We are in fact always both engaged in all the projects. We don't separate. It is a continuous dialogue about everything.*

*If I think of something that characterize more myself in the partnership I think it is maybe my interest in the "holistic" relational aspect, the fact that I'm always thinking about it and pointing at it. I believe that it is always present and it is all manifest in how we organize ourselves, our life. You cannot separate anything. You cannot say: we do this architecture. What we do is always also reflecting who we are, and how we live, how we organize us as a team. So I guess that I am the one that says: let's look at ourselves now!*

Thank you very much Siv, it was indeed beautiful to listen to you.



## 1.5 Interview with Akira Kasai

**Akira Kasai** was born in Japan in 1943. He is acknowledged as one of the pioneers of butoh dance together with its founders Kazuo Ohno (1906-2010) and Tatsumi Hijikata (1928-1986). Before meeting them and discovering butoh in the early 1960s, Kasai was trained in modern dance, ballet and pantomime. He started his own studio in 1971 but he interrupted his dance career in 1979, when he moved to Germany with his family to study Eurythmy and the European culture, that since then have deeply influenced his work, thus marking a decisive evolution of butoh. Back to Japan since 1986 he returned on stage only in 1994 with the work *Saraphita* and revived his studio Tenshi kan. After 15 years of interruption, his career has quickly flourished: since then he has performed, choreographed and taught in Asia, the Americas and Europe.

The interview took place in Rome in May 2014, after a five days dance workshop to which I participated. The interview was in our mother languages: Italian and Japanese, with the kind translation of the interpreter Daisuke Kurihara.

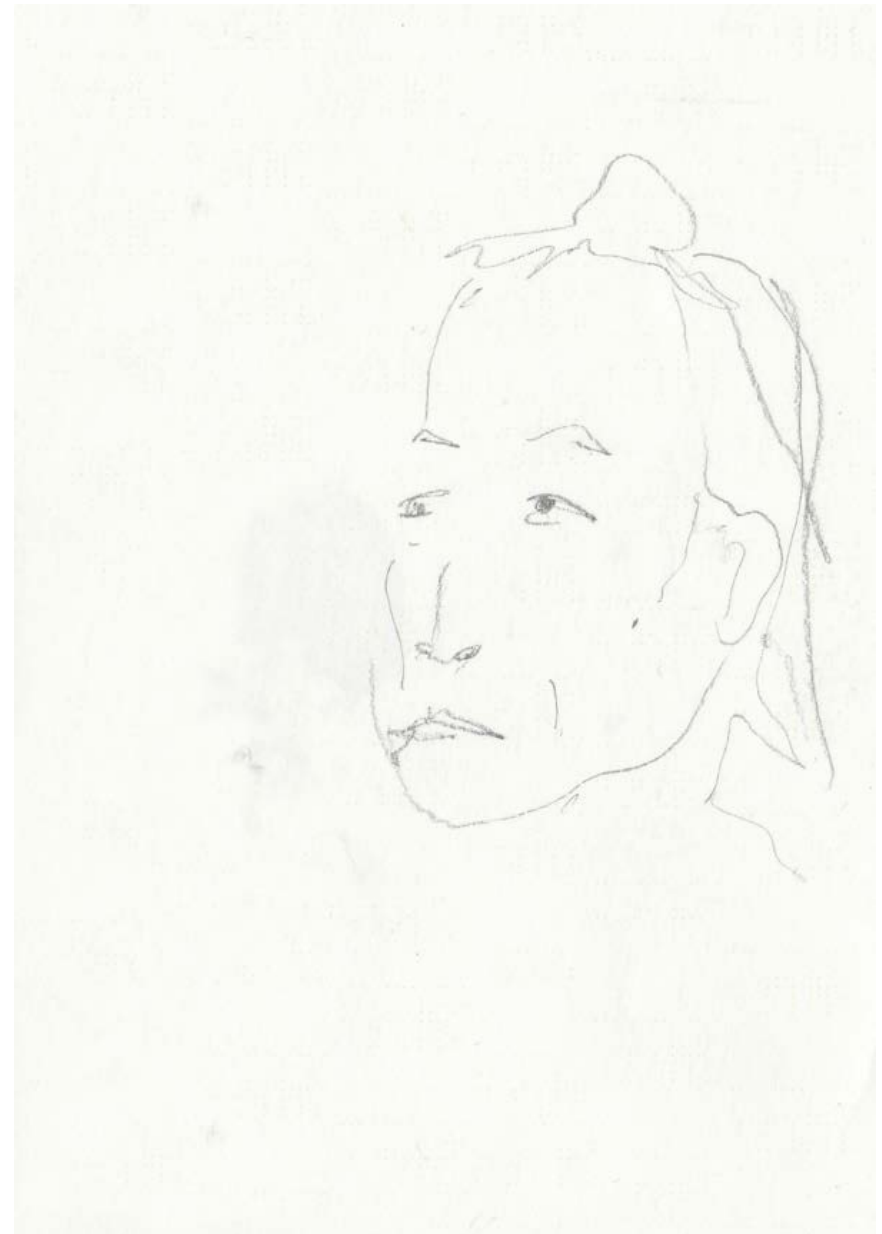
*Valentina Signore*

Mr Kasai, I would like to ask you what it is to create a dance. Both as a dancer and as a choreographer. As the one that improvises and one that designs a dance for others in advance. During your conference yesterday you said that imagination is stronger than reality, because it creates reality. So I would like to know if imagination and creation are the same thing for you. And then, what does it mean in your work to imagine improvising and to imagine as a choreographer.

*Akira Kasai*

*Yesterday and today we spoke about turning the body inside out. To move the body means to turn it over, to revolt it so that what was interior becomes exterior, and what was exterior ends up at the interior. The interior of a body. It is the same for material things too. Think about where is the interior of a thing. Imagine to break this stone in two parts to see its interior. What appears then is not the interior, but another exterior. And so we break it again, and again, till the infinite. But so then, where is the interior of the thing, of the matter? Valentina, where do you think the interior of matter is?*

Figure 1.5  
Akira Kasai  
(by Valentina  
Signore).



I think I can feel it, but I cannot see it.

*Yes, we can only feel it. And if we want to enter the interior of things, there is only one entrance: the imagination. To create an unlimited imagination starting from that thing. From this stone for example. For example, this stone. The image can be anything. This is my tooth. Can I say that this is my tooth? In the imagination we don't have the category right or wrong. It is impossible to insert the idea of right or wrong in the imagination.*

*In the moment we perceive an image as real, then it is correct. For this I can say with no problem that this stone is my tooth. It is my tooth. With this stone-tooth I eat the world, with this I eat the time, I eat the vegetal.*

*And in the moment that I know that this image is like this, then it is correct. Thus, to imagine means to extract till the infinite imagination from the matter. To dance, improvising.*

*Improvisation is something that arises at the instant. It is not like a choreography of course, but it is generated instant by instant. It's a matter of dancing those images that are generated at any given time. For the improvised dance, what is at stake is not to judge if it is a good dance or not, but how much 'reality' is present in the imagination that is creating that movement.*

Where does the imagination come from? From the matter or from yourself?

*It comes from both. Both from the matter and from the one who imagines. If we analyze scientifically this stone: this stone is not me, this stone in an object. The imagination binds me to the stone. And without imagination mankind and matter cannot find a connection.*

How much of your intention and will is there? Where is your intention in it? Yesterday during the workshop you told us that if you want to create a "free" movement, you don't arrive to create it, because you want it. When

you decide to create a dance, what makes this happen? How does the creation of a dance, of a choreography start?

*When we create something, we don't create it by understanding it. In other words, we don't know what it will turn out at the end. **We create because we don't know. If we already knew we wouldn't create. Thus, while we create we never know.***

Thus, to create is to put oneself in the condition of not-knowing?

*It is exactly because I don't know that I do create. It is like the meeting between a man and a woman. You can meet only a person that you don't know. Nobody knows when they will be together how it will go, how their relationship will end up. But this is why we meet. It is the same for the relationship that is created between me and the stone. Initially there was nothing between us two. In the moment when this object gives me an image, then a bind is created, something starts.*

So this way of entering into a creation doesn't regard just the dance, but is a more general attitude, towards the world and life.

*It is exactly as you say. In life we cannot walk along a path that we already know. We walk because we don't know the path. Valentina, do you understand what I mean? It means to go and search for something. It means adventure. It means to jump toward the unknown.*

*What we already know, in general, doesn't count so much. To jump in the unknown it is possible only if we are prepared (willing) to throw ourselves into it, and this is a big adventure. If we throw ourselves into something having already expectations about what we will create, if we already know, then we don't really throw ourselves.*

***To do it we need courage, the courage to put our own life at risk. Without courage we cannot create. Without courage we cannot even think or reflect about the art. Art doesn't mean only to create an "oeuvre", but also at the***

*same time to transform ourselves till the infinite. I am completely different from the myself of yesterday.....*

*For me Valentina of yesterday and Valentina of today are completely different. I am discovering a Valentina completely new, whose existence was unknown to me yesterday. **To leave every day in this way, this means to create.***

*Maybe my answer is much different from what you were expecting. However, to create is not something easy. It is not easy. If you really want to create it means that everyday a new Valentina is born, and the one that is born is not anymore the Valentina of yesterday.*

To be able to create thus it means to achieve a mastery in this capacity of taking risks, of throwing oneself into the unknown?

*No, this is not exactly like that. Artists don't exist. The artist doesn't exist. You can become artist but the artist doesn't exist. **Art doesn't arise from any kind of talent.** It arises only from one thing. We live only because we really desire to understand why we live.*

*Valentina. Why are you born? Where do you come from? Aren't you interested in these questions? This doesn't have anything to do with being an artist. Where are you born from? Where are you going? Why are you born female? This is just a curiosity, here, in the art, it is not important to have talent or not. You want to interview a dancer and an architect. I am not a dancer. I am a dancer only to the extent that I appear as such to the eyes of who looks at me. You have already decided  
Valentina: He is a dancer. But it is not like that.*

*We are not but people who live. You live, I live, Daisuke lives. But the way one lives... Mankind has many questions. Because nobody is born already knowing. Do you know why you are born?*

I don't know...I can feel something, but nothing  
I can express with words.

*The important is this feeling...And what you feel is something that you cannot abandon anymore. The idea to keep it for the infinite, as a result, becomes imagination. In order to become conscious of what you feel as something real, then you can only rely on imagination.*

I forgot all the questions that I had prepared

*This is important. I would like to ask you how old are you?*

Almost 32

*Valentina, what do you want to do now in the future?*

I don't know it exactly. I studied architecture, but I work as researcher. I'm studying butoh dance professionally, but I don't want to become a professional dancer. It's a kind of contradiction, with which I struggle sometimes. As if I would like to take a definitive shape. But somehow I don't, I focus more on the moment than on the future. There are some things that are important for me, things I would like to develop and share, but I don't care so much about the medium through which I do it. It can be dance, architecture or writing. Maybe I don't have to choose necessarily, I am somebody connecting and connected by these things... as these interviews I am conducting show in a way..

*Valentina, you studied architecture. Dance and Architecture are very connected. Dance is architecture in movement. In Architecture the structure is very important. Dance is impossible if we don't know the structure of the body. Architecture and dance are very well connected. Once Rilke wrote some letters to a man that he*

*didn't know. Even though he was completely unknown for him, he replied every day. Every day Rilke wrote him a reply. This series of letters has been published then. I would like to tell you exactly the same thing that Rilke told to this man. **Art starts when there is no method.** But the start of it is, as you told, when we feel something. It is a sort of very light breeze, an almost imperceptible breeze, but if we do not notice it, then poetry cannot start. Rilke didn't reply to him because he knew him, nor because he found any affinity in the letter he wrote him. Why is this person asking me these things? Between these people there was an unbridgeable difference in their life experience, in the way they lived. However Rilke continued to write him only because this person could feel such a breeze. Among other things he says also: How could that man become an artist? That was the kind of question that Rilke hated the most. How to become a poet? There was no other question that could annoy him more. That is why he started to write him.*

He was generous

*No. It's not enough to say he was generous. We cannot define it generosity. Maybe it is Sadness. Why is there such a big difference between me and you. He continued to write letters because he felt sufferance, a sort of desperation. Valentina, you say generosity but it is not this. He is moved by this deep sadness of the difference between them. Moreover Rilke was not such a gentle person. If you think it was generosity it is the most far from art. To think it is generosity is what ordinary is believed. In this sense you are looking at art from the common sense. You have to abandon the common sense to reflect on Art. I invite you to read these letters.*

I will. Thank you mr. Kasai... It has been a "two ways" interview.

*You didn't get the answer that you expected.*

No, I didn't indeed. I thought we were going to speak more about your work. But I am glad. I am touched by our conversation.



# Chapter 2

## Spaces of Creativity

*Claus Peder Pedersen, Siv Helene  
Stangeland and Anna M. Holder*

## 2.1 Introduction

*Claus Peder Pedersen*

Leon van Schaik has examined spatial intelligence from an architectural perspective in *Spatial Intelligence. New Futures for Architecture*. Drawing on Howard Gardener's discovery of seven intelligences, van Schaik argues for the underexplored importance of spatial intelligence to architectural design. He examines how spatial intelligence works on the individual as well as communal levels and helps to form particular spatial and architectonic formations. Van Schaik focuses his research on the formation of spatial intelligence and how it determines architectural works. He touches briefly on the importance of workplaces as reflections of designers' mental spaces and thus as an expression of their spatial predispositions and interests.

For the Aarhus School of Architecture contribution to this book on creativity, we have decided to focus further on the role of the workplace. The inspiration for this is not only Leon van Schaik's book. It has been striking after attending several of the Practice Research Symposia organised by ADAPT-r how often creative practice researchers examine the spatial organisation of their offices or workshops to form a better understanding of their practice. This has led us to investigate and discuss how the spatial context of creative practices shapes – and is shaped by – design processes. We have asked ourselves about what role the broader spatial and cultural context play in the architectural design process? How spatial configurations can influence or challenge interactions between designers, collaborators, and clients? How can spaces structure, promote or even inhibit design processes by allowing for different interactions with drawings, models, and software?

The Aarhus contribution probes some of these questions from three different perspectives. Anna M. Holder offers a theoretical contribution to the discussion in *Places of Creative Practice Research*. This text proposes ways to think about the places in which creative practice and creative practice research are undertaken. It discusses how places might enable or affect possibilities for the creative activities and practices. The text brings together theories juxtaposing the role of the creative individual with creative agency engaging a wider network of interacting human and non-human entities. It ends with specific examples of research by ADAPT-r

Figure 2.1



Figure 2.2



Figure 2.3



fellows.

*Spatial contexts and relational design processes explored by drawing* by Siv Helene Stangeland are based on her creative practice research as an ADAPT-r Ph.D. fellow at the Aarhus School of Architecture. She researches the practice Helen and Hard that she leads with partner Reinhard Kropf. Her text examines the creative spaces of the practice. She maps the spatial layout of Helen and Hard during different periods of the office's 20-year history. The mapping describes the organisation of the workspace as the practice gradually grows, reorganises and relocates over time. Just as importantly, the mapping covers key projects, collaborations and intellectual influences to form a description of the workspace of Helen and Hard as a dynamic space of relations. The text also reflects on Siv's particular contribution to the relational dynamics of Helen and Hard through the investigation of personal drawings. Inspired by the dynamics of the Norwegian landscapes, they are used to discuss her contribution to the design thinking and ethos of Helen and Hard.

*Workspace* is a short photographic essay by Claus Peder Pedersen. It presents five workspaces of academic faculty members at the Aarhus School of Architecture. The faculty members are all engaged with creative development and artistic or practice-based research. Their spaces are shown in wide-angle photos centring on the predominant workplace. The faculty members are absent from the photos, and the reader is left with the visual and spatial traces of the activities and projects that have been carried out there.

Figure 2.4



Figure 2.5



## 2.2 Places of Creative Practice Research

*Theoretical perspectives on the relational understanding of social action and the spaces that catalyse, support, and are shaped through creative practice*

*Anna Holder*

### Introduction

This chapter explores the spatial contexts of creative practice as active agents in processes of design, and, conjointly, how processes and practices of design impact upon their spatial setting. The context for this exploration is a wider reflection on the processes of creative practice as research under the auspices of the *Architecture, Design and Art Practice Training-research* (ADAPT-r) Marie Curie Initial Training Network. This network, and the programme of events undertaken over the years of its operation (2013–2016), not only provide a context through posing questions about how best to develop and support creative practice research. The other catalytic element of the programme toward creating new knowledge of creative practice is in the *bringing together* of a diverse array of international creative practitioners as an active network, and supporting them to open up access to one another's processes and understandings of creative endeavour.

The aim of this text is to contribute theoretical insights in terms of possible understandings of the relationship of creative activity and spatial context, and models of conceptualising creative practice in terms of social-material networks and activities. The purpose of this contribution is to provide a basis for an understanding of *how place and network matter* for the production of knowledge through design and other creative practice.

### Creativity within a network

In the interests of providing a sure footing for the journey I wish to lead the reader on, I will begin with a very brief discussion of creativity and its role within the city and society, as I am interested in using and exploring the term from a critical and politically enmeshed perspective. As Edensor, Leslie, Millington, and Rantisi argue clearly in their discussion of the creative city and vernacular

creativity, there is an overwhelming tendency in both regeneration practice, urban policy and theories of the creative city to privilege certain actors, places and ideologies of creativity. Particularly, the individual creative genius is emphasised as foreshadower and maker of the new, and thus a route to new routes and opportunities for capital, and the cultural quarter or downtown area, as a crucible whereby clusters of such actors forge connections and innovations with a focus on economic potential for the city.<sup>8</sup> In opposition to this model, the concept of vernacular creativity draws attention to creativity as a distributed capability (distributed across diverse spaces and contexts) instantiated in practices which are relational, between humans and the assemblages in which they act: spatial, material, purposeful and ethical as well as productive, and not necessarily productive in material or economic terms:

*“creativity is social and sociable, culturally specific and communally produced, and is located in innumerable social contexts.”<sup>9</sup>*

In beginning my discussion of the spatial aspects of creative practice research, as an area where highly creative practitioners undertake individual research through their practice, I am aware that an emphasis on the distributed and social aspects of creativity, and an undermining of the belief in the creative hero genius can be seen as a threshold of controversy. Indeed, it must be noted that this controversy between creativity as a capacity of exceptional people, a special capability and on the flipside the democratic urge to emphasise the creative capacity or all, an ordinary capability, is longstanding and well-documented, as Pope notes in his 2005 study 'Creativity: Theory, History and Practice':

*“... extra/ordinary. This is the axis upon which many arguments about creativity rotate. Is creativity extraordinary: the prerogative of a few individuals who are in some respects exceptional, whether through innate 'genius' or by chance? Or is creativity ordinary: a commonly available, essentially routine capacity latent in everyone? The specialist literature on this question has been and continues to be divided [...] Earlier studies of 'genius' [...] tend to assert or assume the 'extraordinary' case [...] Thinkers from Rousseau onwards, however – including many of those involved in programmes*

8 (Edensor et al. 2010)

9 (Edensor et al. 2010, 9)



*of liberal or revolutionary educational development, from Rudolf Steiner to Paolo Freire – have tended to insist upon the ‘ordinary’ case.”<sup>10</sup>*

Tracing a historical and geographical spread of accounts of creativity divided between these positions, Pope arrives at the current understanding from psychological and educational research, drawing on Michael Howe’s account of Genius, whereby, the mental processes of genius and ‘ordinary’ thinker are shown to be qualitatively alike.<sup>11</sup>

My own approach to the study of creative practice, focussing on architecture, and following my experiences as a practitioner in architecture and landscape and urbanism practice, and my subsequent research into practice, follows an interest in creativity as emplaced and embodied activity that occurs within relational networks. Architecture is made in places, by complex assemblages of people, things, processes, technologies, materials. Till in his 2009 work ‘Architecture Depends’ calls for a recognition of the *contingency* of architecture, that many more things are connected to and influence architectural production than what goes on in the architects’ studio, than the weight of their hand on the pen (or stylus, or mouse).<sup>12</sup>

Paying attention to the means by which architecture is made, and to creativity within a set of material and social practices, necessarily acknowledges also a distributed creative production. Architecture is made: in local policy plans, in funding bid documents, in planners’ offices, in property boundary lines (going back centuries), in random conversations, in sustainability policy, in the shiny tower blocks of ‘big’ players, and the shiveringly-cold community halls of the public meeting. It is made in the words of the foreman who ‘translates’ the plan pinned on the wall to his group of carpenters. It is made in eighteen facade options churned out for an indecisive oligarch. It is made in an expensively rendered collage telling us what this bare patch of ground will look like next.

This is not to diminish or belittle the individual as creative actor: I wish to recognise the importance of the experienced creative practitioner, building a solid base for innovation and creativity through practice. However, I emphasise that the creative practitioner operates within and is responsive to a wider network.

<sup>10</sup> Rob Pope, *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> (Pope 2005)

<sup>12</sup> (Till 2009)

In what follows I will focus firstly on building an understanding of the role of space and location in social action, drawing on both practice theory and architectural theory. Subsequently I will use this theoretical understanding of the role of space in social action to discuss instances of creative agency within creative practice research, with particular attention to the ways in which creative practitioners ‘read’, understand, use and change different spaces and territories within their work.

### **A focus on practices rather than individuals**

Practice theory, as a model of understanding social action, focuses attention on social practices – routine behaviours which incorporate specific knowledge, knowhow, knowledge of values and motivations, together with bodily activity, and material resources (things and their uses).<sup>13</sup> It offers an alternative to the understanding of human action as guided only by individual intention and private gain, or the contrasting understanding of action guided by collective consensus and social rules.

To describe one unified ‘practice theory’ is of course a simplification, drawing together understandings from social theorists Giddens and Bourdieu among other cultural theorists and philosophers, and the wider ‘practice turn’ in the humanities and social sciences.<sup>14</sup> But I believe it is helpful, within this discussion of creative practice, to position practices as a unit of analysis, particularly within a model of creative practice research which relies on reflective practice and can become firmly entrenched in conceptions of individual agency. Taking Reckwitz’s definition of a practice, from an ideal type bringing together different approaches to practice theory, we can see how a practice brings together existing ways of knowing and acting, and understanding of why and how to act in certain ways:

*A practice – a way of cooking, of consuming, of working, of investigating, of taking care of oneself or of others, etc. – forms so to speak a ‘block’ whose existence necessarily depends on the existence and specific interconnectedness of these elements, and which cannot be reduced to any one of these single elements. Likewise, a practice represents a pattern which can be filled out by a multitude of single and often unique actions reproducing the practice*

<sup>13</sup> (Reckwitz 2002, 249)

<sup>14</sup> (Giddens 1986; Bourdieu 2005; Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and Savigny 2001)



*[... It is] a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood.<sup>15</sup>*

We might see our actions – in making, designing, fabricating, inhabiting, buying, re-using... – as unique instances. Yet, just as they are connected through our own repetitions, within and across different projects for example, these actions are also connected across time and space to other versions of this particular ‘block’. That is to say: wider projects of certain intentions, a body of know-how passed on through repetitions of the activity or through other means of representation (tacit or explicit knowledge).

As individuals we can ‘carry’ many different coordinated and unconnected practices, through learning and performing them. This is emphatically not to suggest that our activity is strictly pre-determined by a wider social order. As Shove, Pantzar and Watson show, practices are continually changing; dying out, or coming into being as a result of changing meanings and beliefs, and access to material and economic resources.<sup>16</sup> Also, the activities and skills of individuals, as practitioners of a panoply of different practices, vary. The way we enact practices is shaped by our cultural background and tacit understandings of what is needed and accepted to act within certain fields. We may also develop unique capabilities of reading situations, applying bodily and mental knowhow, a “feel for the game” which distinguishes our practice.<sup>17</sup>

### How creative practices take place

In considering how creative practices are performed in space, my interest was first triggered by witnessing the presentations of practitioner-researchers communicating, or exposing,<sup>18</sup> their practice as research as part of the ADAPT-r network Practice Research Symposia, and at examinations leading to the award of RMIT PhD by Practice. One practitioner after another used an image of their studio, workspace or desk as a kind of symbol, to invoke a variety

of understandings of their creative practice.<sup>19</sup> These included: the scale of the operations of their practice; the emphasis on creative activities of the studio, rather than the industrialised mode of the office; the method of dividing and managing activities within a creative workforce; the materials with which a practice was working; the shift towards working as a practitioner-researcher.

It could be argued that this reference to the places of creative production is simply a visual ‘shorthand’ to represent ways of working, and the recurrence of workplace images is something that practitioners learn from attending the presentations of one another, merely a ‘scene setting’ move. However, the challenge within creative practice research of explicating knowledge from practice, much of which is tacit, suggests that the places of creative practice production might indeed merit attention for the development of creative practice research.

#### *Do space and place determine actions?*

The question as to whether, or to what extent, spaces can determine action is of course a critical line of argument and positioning in architectural theory and practice. Attributing deterministic capabilities to the built environment was the basis for Modernist approaches to design and planning, what Heynen refers to as the understanding of ‘space of instrument’, the underlying belief by which new spatial forms are introduced to enact social projects.<sup>20</sup> However, this spatial determinism has been largely discredited by the failure of many of such projects to achieve their intended programs or effects. Outside of the design disciplines, spatial context has been conceptualized as having no decisive role in shaping these processes, though they may leave their mark upon space.<sup>21</sup>

Heynen proposes a third way, that of ‘space as stage’, as an integrative model for the previous seemingly diametrically opposed pair. The model of ‘space as stage’ brings together theoretical approaches which recognize both the shaping forces of the social

<sup>15</sup> (Reckwitz 2002, 249–50)

<sup>16</sup> (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012)

<sup>17</sup> Bourdieu, p.66.

<sup>18</sup> (Schwab 2014) [The term exposition is described by Schwab as a means by which an artistic object’s identity in terms of knowledge is communicated or shown. Practice is exposed as research through this activity of exposition, which may take place in the act of publication in a journal, or presentation at a conference, or in other forms. The exposition of the artistic work need not resemble the work itself, as it can be a process of transformation, and supplementation which allows a different identity (of the practice) to emerge.]

<sup>19</sup> Examples were noted while attending the presentations of Norwegian architect Siv Helene Stangeland, UK architects Deborah Saunt of DSDHA and Tom Holbrook of 5th Studio, Danish designer and academic Martin Tamke and Belgian architect and academic Jo Van Den Burghe at the Practice Research Symposia held at RMIT Europe, Barcelona on 28–30 November 2014, and PhD by Practice examination of James McAdam of London- and Moscow-based practice McAdam Architects, at ETSAB, Barcelona, 28 November 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Hilde Heynen, ‘Space as Receptor, Instrument or Stage: Notes on the Interaction Between Spatial and Social Constellations’, *International Planning Studies*, 18 (2013), 342–57.

<sup>21</sup> (Heynen 2013)

on the built environment, and the effects environment can have on influencing social phenomena:

*“The difference with the first model — space as receptor — is that the agency of spatial parameters in producing and reproducing social reality is more fully recognized. The difference with the second model — space as instrument — is that the theatrical metaphor is far from deterministic, and that this thought model thus allows for a better understanding of the interplay between forces of domination and forces of resistance.”*

This model, draws on the flat ontology of actor network theory, whereby non-human actants are understood to have agency, if not intentionality, and thus influence human action. Latour, a key theorist in the development of actor network theory, pays attention to place as an assemblage of material mediators and intermediaries within a local site. In Latour’s parlance, intermediaries transport “meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs” while mediators “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry.”<sup>22</sup> In developing an understanding of the ways activities and practices maintain or disrupt social understandings, institutions and traditions, Latour brings into clear focus the role of all of the material elements of place in enabling or counteracting our intended actions. In particular he points to the asynchronous planning, making and using of spaces, furniture, materials assembled from other times and other places, as one way in which our expectations enable certain practices to continue.

Using the example of the lecture theatre, Latour highlights the expectations of the needs for acoustic separation, for a certain room layout, for materials which enable the intended use of that space to be performed time after time, and which have been thought out, prefigured and assembled by myriad workers whose agency is now carried by material and spatial elements:

*“Fathom for one minute all that allows you to interact with your students without being interfered too much by the noise from the street or the crowds outside in the corridor waiting to be let in for another class. If you doubt the transporting power of all those humble mediators in making this a local place, open the doors and the windows and see if you can still teach anything. If you hesitate about this point, try to give*

*your lecture in the middle of some art show with screaming kids and loud speakers spewing out techno music. The result is inescapable: if you are not thoroughly ‘framed’ by other agencies brought silently on the scene, neither you nor your students can even concentrate for a minute on what is being ‘locally’ achieved. [...] Locals are localized. Places are placed. And to remain so, myriads of people, behind the doors, have to keep up the premises so that you can remain, you along with your students, safely ‘in it’.”<sup>23</sup>*

Latour emphasises here that there is not a *fixed set* of social ties, nor a structure or set of structures determining our actions within the material world. Also, that face-to-face human interactions, local, and ‘in the moment’ can not be seen to be purely self-determining, free from the influence of other actors, other times, or places. Rather, all interactions are heterogeneous, assembled through human and material agencies, through actions performed long ago, and those in the now, and with implications for those in the future. ‘Society’ is a fragile and complex series of interactions, it is constantly performed: “built, repaired, fixed and, above all, taken care of.”<sup>24</sup>

#### *Paying attention to places of creative practice*

What are the implications for this understanding of place for creative practice? In the example of the lecture theatre, the material aspects of these spaces act as mediators, keeping out the noises of the wider world, directing students’ attention through the layout of the space. While the space and its components and furniture are not determining what can occur there, they are connecting the activities which take place to the intentions, work and care of those involved in designing, constructing, programming, keeping, cleaning etc. If we pay attention to the places of creative practice, we might discern the network of agencies enabling them, the array of moves supporting the establishment and continuity of activity, and the ways in which spaces, people and objects interact in the practices of creativity.

Yaneva’s ethnographic fieldwork in the office of Dutch architecture firm OMA in the 2000s gives insight into the different activities of design and their spatial patterns and movements within an architect’s office.<sup>25</sup> Viewed with the anthropologist’s gaze, design processes were revealed not as inspired acts of creative genius or

<sup>22</sup> (Latour 2005, 39)

<sup>23</sup> (Latour 2005, 195–96)

<sup>24</sup> (Latour 2005, 204)

<sup>25</sup> (Yaneva 2009a; Yaneva 2009b)

mechanistic problem-solving, but rather a back-and-forth of trial and error, material and spatial manipulations of models from past projects repurposed to address the problems of new schemes, and the moving of representations, drawings and materials around the office between designers. Designs are seen to be produced through circulating flows of blue foam shapes, conveniently-placed cola bottles, and models migrating across projects in the hands of an architect passing between tables.<sup>26</sup>

The way of working<sup>27</sup>, the litter of disposable and transferable foam objects that ‘flow’ within the office is particular to: materials of model-making, which must be relatively cheap; the method of designing with volumes, which are thus more fast and simple to make than, say, detailed façade elements; the technology of the hot-wire foam cutter, which enables fast production and, needing little skill to operate, can be used by many designers rather than one skilled technician. It helps here to have a relatively large office, including lots of table-space on which these objects can sit around, be moved and re-used, rather than needing to be cleared away for other activities. So probably a location with cheap office space is necessary – thus the spatial configurations of creative practice in Rotterdam differ from, for example London.

We might also consider the scope of the practice’s work – this office, like many other large-scale practices, has a global spread of projects, which come and go quickly – early stage competitions, design schemes which are then put ‘on hold’ for months. In their method of working, where hordes of designers are shuttled from one project to another, often migrating across continents simply by walking across the office, the work can no longer be specific to the project’s site in real terms. Instead, as we might infer from this description, the office itself becomes a critical site and set of conditions.

The particularities I have listed above are also true for other production sites of architecture. A different set of conditions in each case, but often the assemblages will have similarities. Material practices and design approaches are passed between offices, schools of architecture, disciplines, through the movement of people, through new technologies, through changing values. In looking at places, we must be aware always to be starting ‘in the middle of

things’, a set of ever-expanding connections.<sup>28</sup>

Beauregard, writing on the micro-politics of spatial or land-use planning as practice, draws attention to the array of places in which planning takes place in order to better understand whose voices are able to be heard within planning controversies and how planners can engage with diverse publics.<sup>29</sup> Paying attention to the activities and discourse enacted within a private planning company’s offices, the offices of city and county planning departments, the spaces used for meetings with lawyers, consultants, a public focus group and public meetings, Beauregard notes that places, as contexts for communication, structure the types of discussions and their subject matter.<sup>30</sup>

In the following section I will pay attention to some of the array of places in which creative practice research is developed and exposed.

### Places of creative practice research: workplaces, places of exposition and sites of intervention

#### *Creative work places*

The office or studio of the architect shapes creative processes firstly through the resources it affords. This can be in terms of the size and layout – the Euclidean spatial considerations – but also location and other actors who inhabit or have access to the space. Workplace selection is as much contingent as planned, as economic constraints and the types of suitable space available often meaning that creative workspaces are located in areas which have lower rent as they are undesirable for other businesses or housing. (However, the location of creative workers in these areas is recognised as an established step on the path of gentrification, as amenities and services move in to serve the needs of the creative workers and contribute to change of use and rent increases and rising property values).<sup>31</sup>

In focussing on activities as they *take place* in the places of creative practice, we can learn more about the particular practices and how these translate into creative practice research. Faulconbridge, in a study of architecture practices operating at the global scale, describes the architecture studio as a community of practice, and a

26 (Yaneva 2009a)

27 I draw here on Yaneva’s descriptions from her ethnographic study, also insights into OMA’s workings from the 2011-12 Rotor-curated exhibition ‘OMA/Progress’ at the Barbican Art Gallery, London, and my own experience working within another international, Rotterdam-based design office in the period 2003-4.

28 (Latour 2005, 196)

29 Robert Beauregard, ‘The Neglected Places of Practice’, *Planning Theory & Practice*, 14 (2013), 8–19.

30 (Beauregard 2013, 13)

31 David Ley, ‘Artists, Aestheticisation and the Field of Gentrification’, *Urban Studies*, 40 (2003), 2527–44.

structure for particular forms of social interaction that contribute to the design process. This includes reviews of one-another's work, but also chat and gossip about the activities within the office and those of rival firms. He notes that the collective enterprise or motivational knowledge of the activities taking place within the studio are defined in part through the common training that architects have experienced, as well as the guidance and values of those running the design office.<sup>32</sup>

*Sites of making public or bringing to light*

An example of a social and material activity that circulates within the workspace - from education to practice to research - is the activity of 'pinning up' for project review. This activity is part of a wider practice of development of projects in the design stages. Drawings, work-in-progress, rough sketches and screen shots of 3D computer models etc. are collected together and exhibited within the office - either on a pinboard or assembled on a table top, for feedback or input from the project team or a more senior figure within the organisation. This *gathering together* and *making public* (within a controlled space and public) of one or more individuals' work, provides a clear visual overview of the state of progress. It brings matters to light, out of the *privacy* of the worker's computer screen, and allows connections to be made, both within the project and to other work within the office. Somewhere between the tutorial and the 'crit' of architectural education, the purpose is to improve the project, and is thus very different from a presentation to a project client, or a public exhibition of the architect's work. It necessarily happens here, in the office, as a controlled 'making public', so ideas in progress and potentially contentious design moves can be reviewed in a space which is safe from them becoming fully public and causing political controversies.

Practitioner-researchers from the ADAPT-r network report using this method of bringing to light and garnering feedback in the development of their research; pinning up work they are going to present for a PhD supervision for a preliminary discussion in the office.<sup>33</sup> A critical difference in the work of the PhD by Practice in comparison to the day-to-day project development is an emphasis on developing understandings across projects and time periods, looking at the work of the practice as an oeuvre and how this might

be better understood and explicated.

*Sites of creative practice as repositories of knowledge*

The process of 'bringing to light' within the development of practice as research is relevant to the role of the office or studio as a physical and living repository for past projects and works but also the knowledge of the office. Experienced practitioners design through recourse to a wealth of references, from others and from their own work, elements of which can be deployed, tested quickly as a design solution and used to filter, refine or change the approach to the problem in hand.<sup>34</sup> Within the design office, newer employees will be directed to look at images and drawings from older projects from the practice, to learn from and sometimes replicate construction details, material specifications, or methods of representation that have relevance for the project they are working on. The locating of these references and recognition of their relevance to the new projects is part of the role of the more experienced practitioner. They perform a living 'directory' of the past work to support and drive future work.

However, the experience of those supervising the PhD by Practice over successive cohorts at RMIT has drawn attention to the ways in which knowledge of certain useful or recognised past works can elide or hide understanding of the full oeuvre:

*"a very interesting Australian practice with three partners and one office on one side of the continent and one on the other. And I went to visit the two on the West coast, and they said, "Yes, we've got about a hundred projects that we've done. We've closed this alley and the office next to us closes at 4 o'clock and we'll put trestle tables out there, we'll bring out all the models and we can play 'Happy Families' ". (You know, see which models fit with which). And the models kept coming, and they kept coming, and eventually they did a count - they had 300 projects. They didn't even have a mental picture of the extent of what they'd done."*<sup>35</sup>

The design office, then, in the process of creative practice research, can become a site of hidden work being revealed.

32 James R Faulconbridge, 'Global Architects: Learning and Innovation through Communities and Constellations of Practice', *Environment and Planning A*, 42 12 (2010), 2842-58.

33 Tom Holbrook, Presentation of PhD by Practice at ADAPT-r Day, University of Westminster, London. 20 January 2015; Deborah Saunt, Presentation of PhD by Practice, RMIT Europe, Barcelona. 27 November 2014.

34 (Lawson 2004)

35 Leon van Schaik. Interview with Leon van Schaik and Katharine Heron at University of Westminster, London 30.03.2015, undertaken by Anna Holder and Eli Hatleskog as part of activities of the ADAPT-r ITN.



### A wider network of places

An observation of practitioner-researchers undertaking the PhD by Practice while running larger organisations, is their reference to their need for other places outside the design office to develop and explicate the research. Deborah Saunt, director of architecture office DSDHA talks of working on developing her PhD by Practice on the kitchen table and also on aeroplanes. Tania Kalinina and James McAdam, founding partners of McAdam Architects discuss working away on their research in “boring three star hotel rooms”, savouring the workspace and time away from the office, claiming: “To think and produce your best ideas you need to be in a place of no distraction or entertainment”.<sup>36</sup> Tom Holbrook, director of architecture, urban design, infrastructure and landscape practice 5<sup>th</sup> Studio, rented a separate workspace to hide away and write his PhD research catalogue. He recounts feeling guilty sitting writing in the studio, reflecting at a larger scale, looking back to past and forward to the future of the office, when his staff were clamouring for his attention on projects developing in the here and now.<sup>37</sup>

### Places of exposition

The establishment of creative practice research fellowships at institutes of higher education, such as those of the ADAPT-r ITN, provides an opportunity for creative practitioners to move between their places of work and opportunities for reflection, and translation and exposition of practice as research:

*“Creative practice research is typically undertaken in a web of relations held between the studios of venturous practice and studios/laboratories of higher education institutions. There remains significant room in the Higher Education Sector for creating better research environments and relationships between the academy, the disciplines and venturous practice for creative practice research.”<sup>38</sup>*

In addition to providing workspace within institutions of higher education, places of creative practice research within the higher

education environment for the ADAPT-r network include the Practice Research Symposium, a biannual event for research presentation and development which has been well-documented in the evolution of the long-running RMIT PhD by Practice program.<sup>39</sup>

Also documented in the development of the PhD by Practice through its adoption within Europe is the space of the viva or examination.<sup>40</sup> This has come to be used not only as a space of oral and visual presentation of the research, but has evolved into a spatial and material ‘setting out’ of the practice *as* research, a bringing forth of the materials of research from the workspace into a wider public realm.

*We sit in rows, facing a long, raised, structure, a sort of stretched ‘work table’, on the surface of which an intricate geometric line drawing has been inscribed. At one end, the drawn surface rises up to form a perpendicular screen, and a video projection plays in a loop.*

*In front of me, four stools support the three examiners and one moderator. They are raised above the rest of us, sitting not quite ‘at the table’ but observing from front row seats.*

*We are occupying the mezzanine level in the headquarters of the COAC (Collegi d’Arquitectes de Catalunya) on the busy Plaça Nova in the historic centre of Barcelona. Around me, the lines of onlookers are hushed and expectant; they are here, as I am, for the examination of a PhD by Practice undertaken at RMIT Barcelona. From the downstairs space, the bookshop of the architecture institute, there is noise and bustle, which circulates up between the openings in the glazed balustrades of the mezzanine. It intrudes into the semi-privacy of this space, and distracts me momentarily. My gaze shifts: outside, in the city square and street beyond, people stop, talk, walk on. Focussing again, my eye moves back to the drawing and the performance in front of me.<sup>41</sup>*

Riet Eeckhout’s doctoral research into ‘Process Drawing’ explores the performative nature of drawing, investigating the field of drawing as a bodily phenomenon, selectively traced and

36 Deborah Saunt, Presentation of PhD by Practice, RMIT Europe, Barcelona. 27 November 2014; PhD by Practice examination of James McAdam, at COAC, Barcelona, 28 November 2014.

37 Tom Holbrook, Presentation of PhD by Practice at ADAPT-r Day, University of Westminster, London. 20 January 2015.

38 ADAPT-r ITN, ‘The Research Environment’. Annex 1 - ‘Description of Work’, November 2012. (Amended 28 April 2014), p.14.

39 (Van Schaik and Johnson 2011; Van Schaik 2013; Rattenbury 2015)

40 (Verbeke 2013)

41 Description based on author’s experience, notes and sketches from the PhD by Practice examination of Riet Eeckhout, at COAC, Barcelona, 28 November 2014.



processed through the hand. For the examination of her PhD work, Eeckhout created a semi-public display of the intimate space of the drawing, focussing on the environment between the observer and the observed in the act of drawing – what she refers to as being “between me and what I’m looking at”. Eeckhout’s performance of her relationship with the process of drawing used a poetic and mesmeric description of her actions, bodily movements of stepping forwards and back to explicate a process of “stepping in and out of the drawing”, a surrender to the process of drawing. The place of the examination seemed to be constructed through this personal relationship between creative practitioner and creative work. As Eeckhout described the processes of making the drawing she leaned in towards the example work traced out on the display table, touched it and pointed to it, walked around it, brushing past one of her examiners so they had to move out of her way as she shifted her position again in relation to the artefact.

Arnaud Hendrickx, another graduate of the RMIT PhD by Practice, refers to the process of designing the space of the examination as ‘staging an argument’, describing how the physical space, placing of players and audience are conceived as part of the exposition of knowledge and of a particular line of creative practice research.<sup>42</sup> Drawings, models and other design elements or representations of projects become players to be placed and deployed by the practitioner-researcher as part of the actions of exposition.

### Sites of Intervention

In developing the PhD by Practice, practitioner-researchers continue in their practice throughout the period of the PhD. Thus they research through reflecting back on their past works, but also in developing new work. For architects, landscape architects, interior designers and site-specific artists, the site, that is to say a place under consideration for development, change or intervention, can be critical to both shaping creative practice and understandings of one’s own practice.

Sam Kebbell (an architect practicing in New Zealand, undertaking the PhD in Melbourne and an ADAPT-r fellowship in London) discussed a particular way of understanding site in terms of gauging culturally appropriate interventions to place, which became apparent for him through collaboration with another creative practitioner, Ross Stevens:

42 Arnaud Hendrickx, Presentation as part of Research Methods Training, ADAPT-r activities, RMIT Europe, Barcelona. 31 November 2014.

*He had a really lovely way of thinking about architecture. He’s an industrial designer but he’s designed and built his own house. And we were looking through details [for an office interior for Saatchi and Saatchi in New Zealand] and having a conversation about how we were handling a certain thing, a desk. And he made this remark about how he thought that we were starting to get the culture of the place right. That phrase, ‘the culture of the place’, completely resonated with me. I understood what he meant even though culture and place are both incredibly vague terms. But for me, it was somehow a very precise thing to say about what we were doing and I’ve definitely carried that through, so in probably every project I now think about the culture of the place.<sup>43</sup>*

Kebbell’s understanding of ‘the culture of the place’, as he went on to clarify it relates to the experiences and expectations of those designing and using the space, the cultural background of practices specific to places, and to the way this can be expressed through visual and material means, suggesting ways of acting in that space:

*It has to do with the mood of a place which is set up by both how it looks and how it works. [In the Saatchi office project] there’s a series of mobile office pods that move around on wheels. It’s very low key, it’s kind of crudely constructed: all the details are very unrefined, and it’s playful. And those values of straightforwardness and playfulness aligned very much with the values that Saatchi had as a group [...]*

*The discussion Ross and I were having was about [some] desks along the edge [of the office]. We were talking about how it might be nice, because it gets quite warm, to sit at these desks with your feet in buckets of cold water, and that that seemed to be within the spirit of things (in the end maybe slightly outside of it).*

*It’s not about building performance, it doesn’t fit with building science or program or typology, but it’s utterly to do with the culture of a place. [Thinking about] having your feet in a bucket came out of the idea that, that’s how we wash the*

43 Sam Kebbell, speaking in a mediated group interview between Sam Kebbell and Siv Helene Stangeland, undertaken by Eli Hatleskog and Anna Holder as part of the activities of the ADAPT-r ITN, University of Westminster, London. 30 April 2015.

*sand off our feet, when you're at the beach, and the perimeter of the Queens Chain<sup>44</sup>, an urban caravan park, all these ideas were floating around. So it's not a big leap to have your feet in a bucket, but for a completely different reason.*

The description of Kebbell's experience of paying attention to the practices and culture of place to inform a design process, are part of a wider reflection about the regional specificity of his work, borne out of his involvement in the ADAPT-r network. Kebbell credits the experience of his fellowship in London, and conversations with other fellows, with enabling him to recognise what he terms a 'New Zealand-ness' in his work, in having to explain his designs and practice approach in ways that address the "cultural distance" between his work and those of the other practitioners he encounters.

Martí Franch Batllori, a landscape architect practicing in Catalunya, teaching in Paris, and an ADAPT-r fellow at Glasgow School of Art also notes the value of moving between places and also bringing others to the sites of his work. Batllori described taking his PhD supervisor across the Catalan countryside on trips to visit his project, and the quality of the conversations that came out of these encounters between practitioner-researchers in the site. Batllori has initiated a project within his PhD by Practice in his hometown of Girona, which develops his practice and thesis of 'design through management' in a semi-rural environment, and his knowledge of both the landscape and the key actors to make the project possible involve a lived and longstanding experience of the site. His developing mode of practice arises out of economic conditions of scarcity and understandings of the micropolitics of change in the region:

*"I'm working for the public sector, I'm working in places where I usually don't have much money. I work in very raw conditions, a very raw public, so ... what level of high culture do you have to deliver?"*

*[...] The project's seminal idea was about reclaiming the city's edge to the countryside through strategic Design by Management actions. So the way to start was [that] I took some references from elsewhere and I went and I talked to the municipality of my hometown, Girona. I said, "Well, I mean*

44 The colloquial expression 'Queen's Chain' refers to the ownership of land next to beaches, lakes and rivers in New Zealand, allowing public walking access along the shoreline.

*to do that, and this would be part of a system of growing value to the edge of town, would you like to play with this? That we collaborate together? I need to borrow some of your garden department staff to implement a pilot project". And quite fast they said, "yes".*

*[...] I knew some people I had previously worked for, who directed me to the Environment Department. Because initially it is about organising the same resources in a different way, but without economical investment, they accepted. Furthermore I found total complicity with the future Head of Green Management, who became really interested. I think this creates the right atmosphere for this to happen."*<sup>45</sup>

Batllori's use of the conditions and context of creative practice as research to intervene in the practices of environment and economy demonstrate a transformative potential of creative practice. This potential is also articulated by Melanie Dodd, spatial practitioner, educator and another graduate from the RMIT PhD by Practice, when she draws attention to flexible, locally specific practices of cultural and creative activities. Dodd highlights the work of creative practitioners at the small scale, where their activities in supporting themselves and others combine to "manage the chaos" of urbanity in a period of change and scarcity:

*"...to first create and then sustain local networks and facilities. This is especially the case with smaller artist and designer studio organizations and larger community arts organizations, which are critical in the way they provide ongoing and practical advocacy for artists and creative users"*<sup>46</sup>

Dodd terms this 'creative agency', enabling creative action and engagement in cultural production, and points to ways in which this can range from the practical enabling of action, including use of space and location ("rooms, studios, galleries, the city", "market, locale, historical and cultural territory"), and different methods of engagement over time, such as residencies, exhibitions and events.<sup>47</sup> Dodd encompasses with this understanding of creative agency

45 Martí Franch Batllori, speaking in an interview undertaken by Eli Hatleskog and Anna Holder as part of the activities of the ADAPT-r ITN, Ghent. 20 April 2015.

46 Melanie Dodd, 'Creative Cities: Managing Chaos Not Cleaning up Mess', in *Cultures of Resilience: Ideas*, ed. by Ezio Manzini and Jeremy Till (London: Hato Press, 2015), pp. 39–43 (p. 41).

47 Dodd.

indirect and enabling capacities, which will catalyse or ‘drive’ creative activity, and also enable access to the values of such action by wider society.

### Positioning places of creative practice research

Within the overall theme of this chapter – focusing on the workspace as a site of creative practice and research – the aim of this contribution is to theorise and demonstrate the interconnectivity of networks of places, materials, and interactions that make up creative practice.

The role of the workspace, office or studio is highlighted as a place of localised practices, which circulate from education to the work environment, and also between organisations. These practices can be repurposed to develop research through and alongside practice. The space of the office can also be seen to ‘hide’ what it contains, for example the archival works which might develop understandings of creative practice, and the processes of the day-to-day work environment, which may benefit from further interrogation in the process of research.

Attention to practices as *emplaced activity and knowledge* is a useful tool in the process of exposition of creative practice research. The emplaced practices of design and creativity can be invoked through talk, gesture, exhibition and representation through other media when designing how to communicate creative works, in order to better trace the series of connectors from explicit knowledge back to practice.

Finally, the involvement in wider networks of creative practice research shows the value of cross-cultural exchange in developing understanding of the specificity of local practices and the siting of creativity within specific cultures of place. The role of the creative practitioner in reading, knowing, proposing and intervening in cultural practices, supporting creativity as a response to economic scarcity, uncertainty and change can be supported by attention to places of creative practice.

## 2.3 Spatial contexts and relational design processes explored by drawing

*Siv Helene Stangeland*

In 2012, Helen & Hard published the book “Relational Design” which starts with the question: How can we make architecture with an ecological awareness? In the book, we present a range of projects to demonstrate different aspects of a relational design approach. In our understanding, relational design is associated with responsive design processes that are able to incorporate changes and feedback as a project develops. It also refers to the intention of developing guidelines and strategies for how to deal with an open-ended relational design process.

The relational design approach has several origins. It is inspired by Doreen Massey’s notion of space as the dimension of multiplicity and that it presents us with the question of the social. It also builds on Freya Mathew’s understanding of a communicative world where matter and nature have their own dynamic and intrinsic unfolding potential, which we can listen to and seek partnership with. We also find a reference to form-generating processes in nature, where reciprocal exchange with the context shape resilient patterns of organisation and structures. This mutual encounter and unfolding of humans, matter, and the environment outlines a vision of a relational design process.

When I entered into the creative practice research program of ADAPT-r I set out to explore the relational design practice of Helen and Hard further. I researched the ecology and spatial organisation of the office and my personal contribution to the design practice. Drawing has become a vital tool for my research, and in this text I will reflect on two of these drawings produced within the process of research. They are part of a long sequence of drawings, which explore different aspects of Helen & Hard’s spaces of creativity.

The first drawing (“Epoch 5”) is an extensive mapping of the architectural practice. It focuses on the habitat of Helen & Hard. I perceive this as a situated system that evolves by increasing the complexity of contextual relations and activities. The second

drawing (“The Tidal Zone”) is a personal exploration, which points to a distinct geographical context and spatial history. It discloses my childhood ‘playground’ in the tidal zones on the west coast of Norway through a free hand drawing. I will discuss how it contributes to my mental space and acts as a present creative source.

In this text, I try to elucidate how these two drawings foreground useful insights on creativity both through the content they ‘bring to the surface’ for me, and the creative process of making them. I conclude with a meta-reflection on how these two different perspectives relate and foreground new insights to the dynamic between spatial context and relational design approach and how the very act of drawing works as a creative medium to reflect and research.

### Mapping the practice

The architecture practice of which I am a founding partner, ‘Helen & Hard’, has been in existence for more than 20 years. In my research I have been looking for a way to establish an overview of the development of the practice over time. In doing this, I intended to reflect and explore Helen & Hard’s relational design approach and show the relational dynamics of the office and its production. I was also searching for a mode of creative practice research wherein the mapping of these questions in itself would become a creative process and ideally an embedded expression of a relational design process.

I decided to make hand drawings of the different physical workspaces we had established and inhabited over the years. I made notes about incidents, activities and interests which helped me identify eight different epochs. I used the presentation software ‘Prezi’ to organise the drawings, images and notes. This software allows the user to make presentations that ‘zoom in and out’ of the presented material. In this way, it became possible to view the whole presentation as an overview or ‘map’, yet also to appreciate the smallest details. I placed the drawings of the different epochs as background and gathered layers of information, photos, and illustrations into epochal assemblages. This process allowed me to present the history of the office in different ways at research symposia. I could take various paths through the epochs according to themes or aspects of the development, which I needed to highlight. It allowed me to work in an iterative process where I gradually assembled loose assemblages of information. The parts and the whole were equally present and helped me create a more linear ‘storyline’. The process and the software supported a dynamic, explorative dimension that

was helpful during the research process and in presentations.

Reflecting on this process, I understand that this way of working resonates very much with how Helen & Hard as a practice is developing architectural projects. The inclusive and broad gathering of information precedes the organisation into possible and often parallel solutions without giving a final answer.

### “Epoch 5 - 2000-2005”

In this text, I have chosen to focus on one of the eight epochs I eventually subdivided the history of Helen & Hard into. The drawing at the centre of “Epoch 5” is showing the factory plot my partner and I bought in Stavanger, Norway in 1996. Lines of text and photos of projects from that period surround the drawing. The workspace is in the centre seen from above without roof. Small glasshouses are placed within the big hall as individual working cells to keep us warm. Recycled containers are stacked on top of each other outside the factory for housing interns and other collaborators, and the courtyard is used for eating common lunch and testing out different material prototypes. There is a small barrack named “Living” and an extension of the factory with the label “Renting”, hinting at an economical household on the plot.

Handwritten notes run like beams around the drawing, with small discrete symbols at the end marking different themes; ‘public behaviour’, networks, journeys, methods, major projects, books we were reading, values, interest fields and breakthroughs.

Photos and graphics are added and make their own rhythm and composition on top of and in relation to the drawing. Some are larger and some are more central, others smaller and peripheral. They are showing projects, conceptual drawings, work in progress and specific important events like the first team meeting where we started defining our values and design philosophy. The tension between the thin lines of the drawing and the photos make the whole picture oscillate between having a random character and becoming a whole and gives it an evolving, dynamic character.

### An overall view

I carefully chose the composition and viewpoint of the drawing so that one can see everything from above. It includes and brings together many different aspects of the practice. At the same time it constructs a new entity from this complex set of relations. It is a viewpoint of someone taking an “overall role”. Someone who is not deeply involved in one single project or aspect, but feeds in concepts, design ideas, strategic decisions on different levels along with leadership, economic management, HR issues, etc. – the complex



role of a practice partner.

### Creating contexts

The drawing in “Epoch 5” is composed without any context or surroundings. The plot looks like an isolated island, which could be anywhere. This representation is not accurate, as the office at that time was very much involved in urban development. The office was even engaged in projects in the neighbourhood of the office. Epoch 5 was, during its short timespan, marked by new challenges in a rapidly growing commercial context. Helen & Hard was seeking strategies to cope with a city completely dominated by a booming oil industry and entrepreneurial culture. We started thinking about how we could tap into this ongoing morphogenesis of the city. We were inspired by Manuel Delanda’s book ‘A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History’, and tried to address visible and invisible forces and conditions as a vehicle for developing projects.<sup>48</sup> This emerging conception of a new context was – and still is – challenging that of our old teacher Christian Norberg-Schulz’ notion of a “Genius Loci”.<sup>49</sup> We tried to join the forces at hand with new tactics and working methods. They were defining the ‘resource household’ (understood as the available material, human, economical, contextual resources), the process and a spatial and topological guideline. As such they were both strategic tools and creative frameworks, which served both the client and our development.

In this perspective, the seemingly decoupled drawing at the centre of “Epoch 5” express the dual situation of being deeply involved yet feeling very different in a professional context. We perceived ourselves as an island in the periphery where we were consolidating our position and values and at the same time we were endeavouring and confronting the contextual challenges through the making of projects in the booming city of Stavanger.

### Revealing new perspectives of a relational design practice

The mapping of the eight epochs revealed how different growth stages are reflected in Helen & Hard’s conception and production of spaces. Over time the focus of the office has developed from immersive, direct and personal interactions with spaces and materials, through the introduction of frameworks which allow for collective development processes, to an interest in form generation

<sup>48</sup> De Landa, M., 1997. “A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History” New York, Zone books

<sup>49</sup> Schulz, C. N., 1980. “Genius Loci, Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture” Rizzoli, New York. 1980.



Figure 2.6  
Stavanger



through growth patterns.

Moreover, while mapping and reflecting on the current epoch I started understanding the purpose of the practice as a distinct 'forming field'. I see it as a rich 'habitat' that projects and ourselves grow from. As an own level of creative intelligence it constellates, brings together and includes all the aspects of being an architectural practice – from leading, managing and organising, to designing and producing spaces. Through the continual projects, it is engaging with the city in different domains. It builds on specific repertoires of embodied references and accumulated knowledge. The mapping of epochs also captures a changing and ambiguous relation to the context of the city.

As a field for ongoing reflection and collective learning it continuously rearranges and adapts itself according to external forces and thus renews its purpose. This systemic coherence of the practice, itself – knowing and organisational adaptability – is a relational capacity and a relational design itself. How we organise the office and how we make architecture has an interesting mutual dynamic.

### The Tidal Zone

When moving to a cabin by the open sea in 2008, I was fascinated by the continuous growth and decomposing processes in the tidal zones. There I found a relation between the old host landscape of pools and the kelp. Seaweed, and algae were changing textures and colours during a day. Inspired by this metamorphosis, I started doing free hand drawings. This led me to explore drawing as an autonomous act without any direct link to the projects we were doing at Helen & Hard. It nurtured a part of my creativity, which did not fit the everyday rush of production and managing the office. In time, helped by reflecting on the drawings through my research, I found ways of linking this drawing practice to the practices of the office. Gradually the free hand drawings have developed to help me capture and reflect intangible aspects of the practice. I use them to explore the growth pattern of a project. I use them to speculate on how to build up and organise a project, how relations form between parts and the whole, or how to design flexible spatial organisations that allow feedback and iterations. I started including text in the drawing as a way of capturing my reflective processes and bring forth my mental space while drawing. This process of discovery was intensified by the sequential making of 15 similar drawings in a much larger format than I had used before.

"The Tidal Zone" is one of these 15 drawings. Lines and text

lines are flowing over the paper in wavering patterns. The text lines are more smoothly running in one direction, while the other lines are intertwining in the other direction. The lines have a rich, expressive repertoire; from dense, soft and detailed to bold, rough and forceful. The density and distance between the lines create depth and shallowness, a hierarchy in perception and a subtle composition. The lines never cross randomly, they follow each other, react to each other, adapt to each other. They create a sense of an oscillating and vibrating whole. When doing these drawings, I became aware of three different properties and roles of lines, which I call the wavering, the weaving and the writing lines.

*The wavering line* is acting without knowing – breaking out, eruptive, surprising, forceful, with temperament, a wild character, uncontrolled in an instant. It has speed, pulse, and spontaneity, unexpected outcome, novelty and freshness, naturalness and roughness.

It is relying on being accepted whatever comes out, trusting the white paper as a holding space, trusting the weaving and writing to make sense of it. It is a becoming line, a wavering line – a reaching out – a pre-sensing line – a vibrating line of raw energy. It is an experiment – a casting out to see what it is afterwards. It is a starting line – the first one to break the white surface of the paper – it is setting the tone – giving a direction – or coming in later when the weaving is getting dull, too repetitive, too known, too much a pattern. It is breaking the rules of the game, introducing the never seen before, a free space. This quality of the line is starting the conversation and makes the drawing a medium and not a tool. It invites to risk taking.

*The weaving line* is receptive, including a process of continuous movement of transformations, finding clues to connect, to make patterns by small variations, never the same and never too different – always echoing the past movement and adding something new, always responding to something, like a rhythm.

It cannot be repeated in the same way because it was done in dialogue with that one moment that will never occur again. It is transforming, integrating, combining, coupling, and weaving lines into the larger net of lines that all appears to be completely integrated – an evident part of the whole.

These lines have a performing, improvised quality, uncontrolled and controlled at the same time. They are not representations; they are that quality of nature embodied as an intrinsic, present resource; a way of acting, perceiving, responding, a way of organising the parts and the whole, a way of feeling and even knowing the whole.

They are expressing the process itself – its real time – performing, not representing.

*The writing line* has a smaller scale, thickness and concentration. It is based on widely shared codifications and familiar patterns. It has a smoother, wave-like movement, a melody with a known rhythm but mostly with unreachable meaning, a fragmented sense making. The writing line is just seemingly communicating; the content is only relevant in the act. It is making captions of what is going on – reflecting while doing, explicating, translating. Its role in the drawing is facilitating many possibilities to connect with, hook on to, develop from or approach.

### Revealing a spatial history

The act of making the series of 15 drawings became a transformative trigger, which initiated a series of insights. I understood in a broader sense the origin of my creativity. I discovered that the nature I played in, as a child is an embodied creative source with its world of forms and spaces. Moreover, I found that I have an intrinsic embodied knowing about how these forms are shaped and generated through natural processes like the dynamic force fields of winds, the waves, the sun, the changing temperatures and cycles. By becoming aware of this origin as an essential spatial history, I also see this as a source for my underlying urge to make architecture as a means to connect with nature. My interest in natural form and space-making procedures, and my ambition to create spatial environments, which have similar properties to nature has this same origin.

In the drawings, the weaving lines playfully explore the idea of nature inspired relations. They combine, include and are never indifferent to the terrain formed by the previous lines. It is in this interaction the weaving happens, and matter becomes the weave in the end. The weaving lines connect small with big, depth with shallow, intimate with vast openness through engaging, being transformed, infected, and affected. They are forming a specific language that becomes consistent and unique because the lines are thoroughly responsive to what is there. The complex combinations of information captured in the drawing are also bound to the particular drawing process, and, if I were to repeat it, the drawing would never be the same again. I find an ‘authenticity’ in this process. There is no background for something else to happen because everything has been rendered surface, the gaps and in-betweens are as important as the lines themselves. The making is the expression.

### Concluding thoughts on spatial contexts and relational design processes

In the text I have argued that a similar notion of relational design can be found through the mapping of the systemic level of the whole practice as well as in the smallest, personal creative act of drawing. I find different aspects of dynamic exchange between spatial contexts and relational design processes on both levels. Moreover, I find similarities in the way that content appears and through the processes of making.

The mapping of epochs of the practice points towards the evident growing interactions between the practice and its immediate spatial contexts – in terms of the workspace, but also to the booming oil city where the practice is situated. The spatial production of the practice in the shape of the projects is mediating this forming interaction. The impact generated by the projects continuously changes the factory plot. Changes happen, for instance, when prototypes of a playground are constructed of used oil equipment in the backyard or cheap living for increasing numbers of employees are provided by recycling containers from the oil industry.

The drawing ‘The Tidal Zone’ points to a particular geographical context and my personal spatial history defined by playing in this harsh coastal nature. It contributes to my mental space and becomes a present creative source and capacity.

The mappings of the epochs explored the multiple relations between different aspects of the practice Helen & Hard. The central, organising element in the mappings was the drawings of consecutive work spaces. Contextual and biographical content is added on top to foreground the dynamic and constellation aspects. It emphasises how the distinct spatial organisation of the workspace is woven together with

The drawing ‘The Tidal Zone’ also reveals a hidden context or spatial reference, which is embedded in the property of the lines themselves. Here the difference between content, context and the making are dissolved. The lines are by their very nature the way the drawer develops the drawing, and this embedded spatial context is continually recreated throughout the drawing. The weaving lines are always responsive to what is there, and yet new potentials are continuously explored through the wavering line by acting without knowing. This combination of operating agenda-less with an agenda is reflected in Ranulph Glanville’s definition of the act of designing. He explains designing as a subtle conversation between different personas in ourselves. Glanville refers to the actor and the listener, identifies the dynamic between the two personas as

the source of creating novelty.<sup>50</sup> The actor is here acting without knowing, and the listener is the one making sense of it. In the act of doodling, which he uses as an example, these two aspects often oscillate so fast that it is hardly possible to decipher or recognise.

It seems that this dynamic between listening and acting is pointing at a mutually informing principle which is unfolding at the core of creativity. I find it embedded in the poetic language of “The Tidal Zone” drawings. However, it can also be recognised in the layered mappings of the epochs, where it is leaving open possibilities for adaptation and change. The title of this text might suggest a discursive distance between a spatial context and a relational design process. But I hope to have argued that the dynamic between them is more of a fluid interweaving or a circular transformation. As in the drawing “The Tidal Zone”, constellation lines become actual lines of matter, surfaced by an organic structuring and a poetic language of contingency and mixtures.

Extract of text appearing in the drawing:

*“My mental space as continuous landscapes,*

*where nothing has an end, there is always something changing, something new, never repetition, just variations, roughness, wildness has always unexpected details, ruptures and continuity at the same time.*

*In the tidal zones where I play – there is no exclusion.... and this creates deep belonging and trust in the possibility of integrating, accepting whatever emerges.*

*– not afraid of destroying, one layer over the next, overlapping, change, always new patterns arising, everything is used, there is no leftover, neither space nor matter, just endless transformations and metamorphosis....”*

Figure 2.8  
“The Tidal Zone” (Siv Helene Stangeland).

“The Tidal Zone”

The drawing covers a thick paper measuring 110cm X 60cm. It is done with a Pentel 0,5 and carried out in one run over 3 hours.

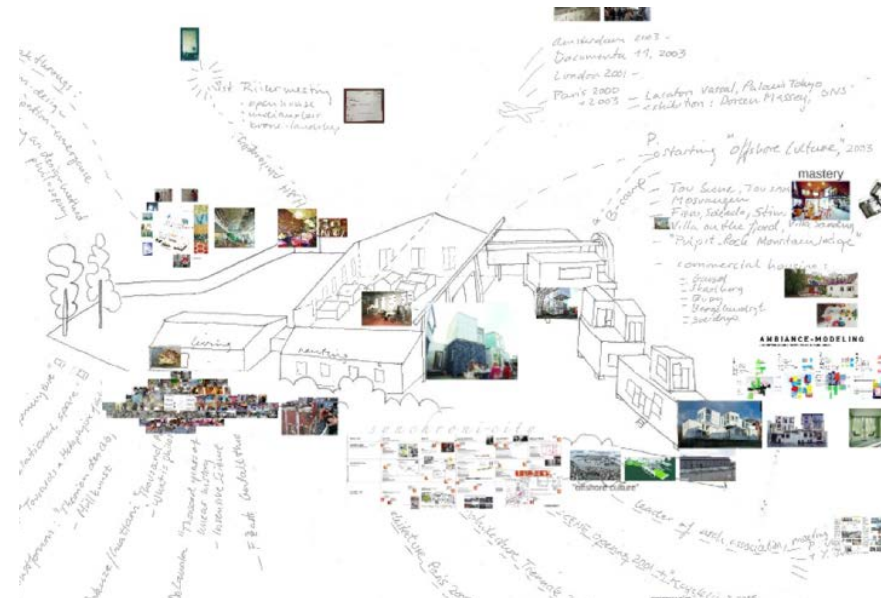


Figure 2.7 “Epoch5”: Text appearing in the drawing: Break throughs: process design, participation-emergence, recycling as design method. Readings: R. Schustermanns Performing live, Doreen Masseys For space, Jean Fishers Toward a metaphysics of shit, Kunstforums Theorien des Abfalls, Deleuze/Guattaris Thousand plateaus and What is philosophy, Manual de Delandas Thousand years of nonlinear history and Intence sciences, F.Pearls Gestalt theory. H&H values/philosophy: crone-landscapes, indian camp, open house, travels: Amsterdam, Documenta 11, Paris 2000 and 2003, Palais de Tokyo; exhibition GNS, Projects; starting offshore culture, B-camp, Tou Scene, Mosvängen student homes, Finns Bakery, Villa on the fjord, Pulpit Rock mountain lodge, Commercial housing: Gausel, Skadberg, Buøy, Sverdrupsgt, Bergelandgt. Public behaviour: Siv leader of Architects Association Stavanger, Tou Scene opening+ exhibition Recycle live, Oslo Architecture Triennale 2003, H&H solo exhibition Galerie d'Architecture de Paris.(Siv Helene Stangeland)



50 Glanville, R. (Ed.) (2007a). “Cybernetics and design” (special issue). *Kybernetes*, 36 (9-10)



## 2.4 Conclusions: Reflecting upon and within Spaces of Creativity

*Anna M. Holder and Claus Peder Pedersen*

The impetus for our focus on space and place as a site, catalyst, support structure and reflection of creative practice research processes came from the repeated references and allusions of creative practitioners to their workplaces as they worked to give voice to detailed understandings of their practice. The three elements of this chapter bring together three different lenses on mutually influencing aspects of spatial context and creative practices.

Anna Holder's contribution brings together theories from the social sciences, humanities and creative practice research to demonstrate the interconnectivity of networks of places, materials, and interactions that make up creative practice. She proposes an understanding of spaces of creativity that goes far beyond current ideas of optimising creativity through more or less imaginative office décor or space planning. Drawing on Latour's actor network theory, she argues for an understanding of spaces of creativity as the complex interactions and exchanges between human and non-human actors with different agencies. The unpredictable complexity of these interactions might challenge the idea of designing specific spaces that promote creativity. But more importantly, learning from STS and actor network theory might invite and encourage the exploration of workspaces, contexts and constellations far beyond the traditional architectural office. The reflections of and upon ADAPT-r Fellows seem to support the relevance of this view. The Fellows' accounts of their spaces of creativity do not focus on the design and spatial layout of the workspace. It is rather discoveries of how the most unlikely locations augment the design process or how random encounters and surprising constellations promote particular design solutions that help define the practice. One common trait seems to be the ability to embrace, engage and nudge at constellations and collaborations to arrive at creative solutions. This 'paying attention' to the places, activities and practices of creative practice offers the potential to understand better how it is constituted and can be exposed as research.

Siv Helen Stangeland's reflection on the different epochs and

sites of her practice Helen & Hard gives a more comprehensive account of the creative space of an individual practice. Stangeland does not refer to Latour, but her notion of relational design builds on a somewhat parallel interest in the complex interactions of different actors and agencies. Her contribution emphasises the importance of geographical context and the physical affordances of site and workspace in shaping the processes and activities of the practice at different time periods. Progressing to different workspaces reflects the development and changing needs of the practice over time. Her drawings of different epochs insist on the importance of the spatial configuration of the office at a given time, but the drawing weaves this space into a dense net of travels, projects, intellectual inspirations that both expand and dissolve the physical space of the office. In this way, the contexts and physical affordances are not deterministic – space to think and work otherwise can be sought and found within 'mental spaces'. The space of creative practice is not only influenced by the designated workspace of the practice office, but also the landscapes and scenery which provide inspiration and space for reflection. The landscapes are also an inspiration for Stangeland's personal exploration of her mental space. The drawings are however not about self-expression or realisation but an instead an attempt to draw forth a better understanding of her particular contribution and role in the design ecology of Helen & Hard.

Claus Peder Pedersen's photographic essay 'Workspace' gives a window into the creative practice research workplace, laying bare the accretions of past works and current projects with which creative practitioners surround themselves. It offers no explanations of the nature of the projects or the design processes that have taken place. The viewer is left with the traces of human and non-human interactions. These glimpses offer scope for the viewer's imagination: are these accretions a visual mnemonic for ideas and connections relating to the work being researched? Is creativity found only in chaos? Or can the ordered, tidy workspace offer more room for reflection?

# Chapter 3 Conditions for Creativity / Creative Practice

*Katharine Heron, Maria Veltcheva,  
Kester Rattenbury*



In this chapter our focus is the work of architects and designers rather than artists, and we have looked at how creativity is ‘valued’ in the general context of the Creative Industries in the UK. We have looked at the roles played in enabling the evolution of creative practice under three headings each separately authored, and its need for support. We have drawn on our experience and the findings of the ADAPTr project through the work of its research fellows.

### **Client or Project**

The opportunity that is provided looking at clients of ADAPT-r Fellows and those in the PRS – and the role of the competition. Katharine Heron

The context of the Economy of Creative Industries and the Client (or patron of the project) describes what is understood as the Creative Economy, and the importance of its success with examples from the UK. If raw creativity feeds into this economy then the commercial success must also support the development of new innovative areas of creativity. The essay looks at the clients’ role or projects role, by drawing examples from the ADAPT-r Fellows.

### **Commission**

The exposure that a commission affords using the example of the Venice Biennale 2014 - Maria Veltcheva.

Architect, Commission and Creativity explores the architectural creativity in the 14th Venice Biennale of Architecture and using the ADAPT-r criteria in the Creative Practice Research (CPR) in this article she reflects on how the role of the “commission” and its constraints give rise to the creative processes in architecture. The architect, in general, needs specific and concrete constraints in order to create an architectural project. Furthermore, some architectural projects appear more creative than others. Using the ability and the tacit knowledge to adapting on several contexts and commissions, the architect could find new paths to develop her/his creativity.

### **Critic and Critique**

The understanding of the work in development exemplified by the ‘CRIT’ – Kester Rattenbury.

Work in Progress compares and likens the process of the Crit widely used in architectural education, with the Practice Research Symposium that is part of the PhD by Practice and therefore the

ADAPTr project. She describes the nature of critical appraisal that is based on the peer reviewer and expertise from related practice, that is reflective and evidence based, that does not rely of a system of metrics but does contribute to an on-going community of practice.

## 3.1 The Context of the economy of Creative Industries and the Client, (or patron of the project)

*Katharine Heron*

*“What inspired you to write this piece?” It is the question most creative people dread. If you’re composing music, you must somehow be in a trance, in some sort of mystical, transported condition suspending all rational thought processes. It comes as a severe jolt to many that creative activity is generally done like any other job, with hard work, craft, intelligence and a dose of cunning.”*

So wrote the composer Julian Anderson in the Guardian on 26 August 2016, and in advance of a UK premiere of his latest work *Incandesimi*, performed by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Simon Rattle at the London Proms on 3 September 2016.

This opening paragraph of his dispels a myth about the magic of creativity, and brings to the fore some necessary conditions to allow creativity to flourish. Inspiration and talent and ability are givens. But Julian Anderson enjoys other necessary conditions to bring this creative activity into the world. He is commissioned to write a new piece, and it is for the wonderful Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Simon Rattle. Such patronage or commission, and this client provide the composer with the first two vital conditions. And it is to be played for a public audience – initially in the beautiful Scharoun concert hall and then at the Royal Albert Hall, and to be broadcast on radio and television. All this is in the context of other world class music. It receives critical acclaim (The Guardian ranked it with 5 stars.<sup>51</sup>). He is a young composer (33 years old) and the piece is relatively short (15 minutes). Is this the equivalent of an architect’s commission to design a new house? Or an artist’s inclusion in a group show?

I suggest Anderson has the perfect set of conditions for creative

activity to flourish, and at the same time it is too obvious. What is so interesting is that Julian Anderson reveals everything about his hard work, craft and intelligence but nothing of his ‘dose of cunning’.

This chapter looks at some of the external factors that support or provide conditions that allow creativity, but do not dwell on the internal factors or the nature of the creative person. We have looked at some of the necessary conditions for his Venturous Practice and for its creativity to flourish. This is not about talent, but opportunities to release and/or nurture and/or develop creativity, and a supporting economic climate to commission it.

Creativity is one of the most overused words in the twenty first century, sometimes misused or even abused. It is vital to our future wellbeing but hard to pin down being enigmatic at its core. We are desirous of creativity, admiring and envious of it, and seek to be creative in our activities.

Perhaps the overuse and misuse is directly linked to the multiplicity of meaning, and multiple interpretations and applications. Degrees of creativity may be relative but it is used as absolute term. It ranges from creativity in cognitive psychology and business management to the concept of the creative genius. There are handbooks of Creativity. There is a fascinating Creativity Research Journal. If you search ‘Creativity’ in Google Scholar, there are over 2 million citations.

Rarely would we expect a mere touch of creativity or a slight coating of its stardust to be satisfying. We want it to be all or nothing. We are passionate about it. We crave it and to be acknowledged as having it. And just how is it important to us? And how do we recognize it? In what ways can we support, nurture, and value it.

Jeremy Corbyn, when newly elected Labour Party leader in the UK, quoted the poet Ben Okri

*“The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering”.*

To create was first on the list, and associated with leading the way forward.

For maybe half a century, urban regeneration projects have recognized the value of the creative individuals to kick-start their regeneration ambition. Seeing artists move into rundown urban areas, taking advantage of cheap rents in interesting places whether in downtown Manhattan, East End of London, post-war Paris or Berlin artists have congregated and into their community and

<sup>51</sup> ref Guardian Newspaper 26 August 2016

places designers and architects have followed, with advertisers and PR people close behind, and then the accountants and lawyers. And then rents shoot up and real estate is suddenly valuable, and demands for improved infrastructure ensures that market forces prevail. Follow the artists if you want know where to invest your money. European investment in cultural institutions such as the Tate Gallery (London) or Centre Pompidou (Paris) has succeed over several decades to bring substantial investment into areas such as Liverpool in the UK or the 'rust belt' of northern France.

There is global understanding and recognition of the value of the Creative Economy, and in the UK it has moved through several phases, noting the changes in the use and understanding of the terms – Creativity Industries, Cultural Industries, and their Economies. Some would suggest this was a marketing ploy invented in the Thatcher years to link together the arts, design and prosperity. Quickly picked up as 'Cool Britannia' by New Labour it embraced everything from Formula 1 car racing to the YBAs (Young British Artists) – artists, architects and designers were all cool. It became a sort of melee of late twentieth century aesthetic and lifestyle. In the twenty-first century, the banking crisis and ensuing recession, rocked all areas. The Creative Economy also found the need to re-describe its value and values. It is the second largest sector of GDP in the UK after financial services. But in the 2010s the drive down of state funding and measures in the age of austerity shrivels all areas from education, research funding, investing in design for long term gain, progressive measures such as British Schools for the Future (BSF)<sup>52</sup>, Housing Design etc. One of the last schools procured through BSF, won the coveted international Stirling Prize<sup>53</sup>. Thus funding is removed from the very areas that are generating future creativity and wellbeing.

These many contradictions proliferate. The commercial art market has never been higher and the average income of artists is as low as it has ever been. At the same time a mindless and pointless project such as the Planted Bridge gains back door public funding.

<sup>52</sup> Architects Journal 2 Feb 2011 Michael Gove singled out Richard Rogers in his latest unprovoked outburst against the profession: Having twice already claimed architects working on the BSF programme represented a waste of taxpayers' money, the education secretary has again targeted the profession in relation to profiteering from schools building. Gove also took a swipe at other 'award-winning architects' and vowed to deny them any role in the growing, government-backed Free School movement.... he said: 'And we won't be getting Richard Rogers to design your school, we won't be getting any award-winning architects to design it, because no-one in this room is here to make architects richer.'

<sup>53</sup> Burntwood School by Alford Hall Monaghan Morris

*Figure 3.1  
Gitte Juul, East  
West River,  
The Workers  
Museum,  
Copenhagen  
2016: Photo  
© David  
Stjernholm*



*Figure 3.2  
Petra Marguc  
Girafes au lycée,  
Paris 10, 2013  
Photo © Petra  
Marguc*



*Figure 3.3  
Michael  
Wildman and  
Irene Prieler,  
Grundstein.  
'Open  
bookshelf'.  
photo © Frank  
Gassner*





The risk is that the creativity of artists, architects and designers becomes a desirable acquisition and bankable commodity, rather than a life enhancing process in need of investment for the future and perpetual renewal. Creativity is valued at its out-turn and not at its input and inception. Too often the client will pay for the production process but not the brilliance of the idea.

In July 2015 two major and closely inter-related reports were published concerning the value to the national economy of the arts and culture, and the need for public investment in the arts to benefit the Creative Industries.

The first of these published by Arts Council England ‘*Contribution of the arts and culture sector to the national economy*’<sup>54</sup> was written by Cebr (Centre for Economics and Business Research) and the second is published by Creative Industries Federation’s (CIF) ‘*Arts and Growth; How public investment in the arts contributes to growth in the creative industries*’.<sup>55</sup>

Creative Industries Federation CEO John Kamfner, launching the publication 2015 said: “There is nothing ‘nice to have’ about the arts and the creative industries, there is nothing tangential, nothing ‘soft’. They are central to our economy, our public life and our nation’s health.”

The reports include some striking statistics. For example:

- Arts and culture is worth £77bn in gross value added to the British economy – an increase of 35.8% between 2010 and 2013.
- Arts and culture industries generated £15.1 billion in turnover in 2012-13, an increase of 26% since 2010.
- For every pound invested in arts and culture, an additional £1.06 is generated in the economy.
- More than one in 12 UK jobs are in the creative economy, with employment increasing 5% between 2013 and 2014, compared with a 2.1% jobs increase in the wider economy.
- Britain invests a smaller percentage, 0.3%, of its total GDP on arts and culture than other countries. Germany invests 0.4%, the EU as a whole 0.5%, Denmark 0.7% and France 0.8%.
- Grant in aid to England’s Arts Council has fallen nearly 30% in the last five years and few

<sup>54</sup> See more at: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/we-publish-new-report-highlighting-contribution-of-arts-to-national-economy>

<sup>55</sup> See more at <http://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com>

Figure 3.4 CJ  
Lim. Studio 8  
Architects. Food  
Parliament. ©  
CJLim

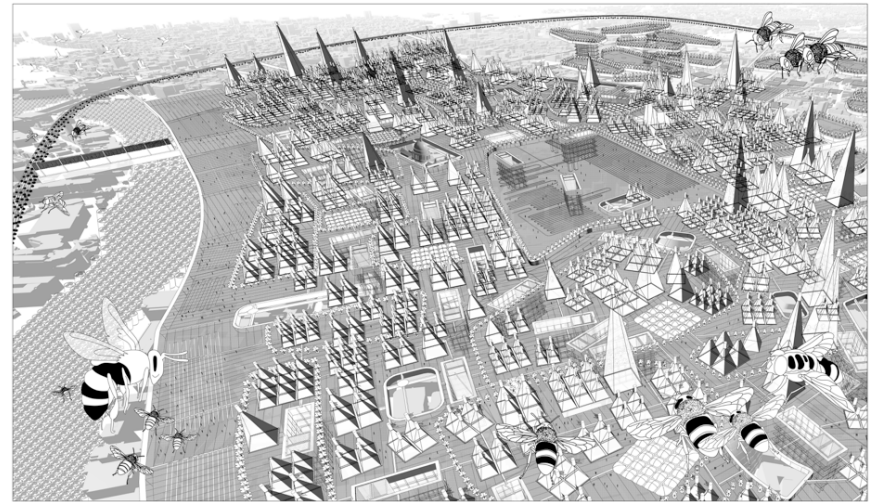
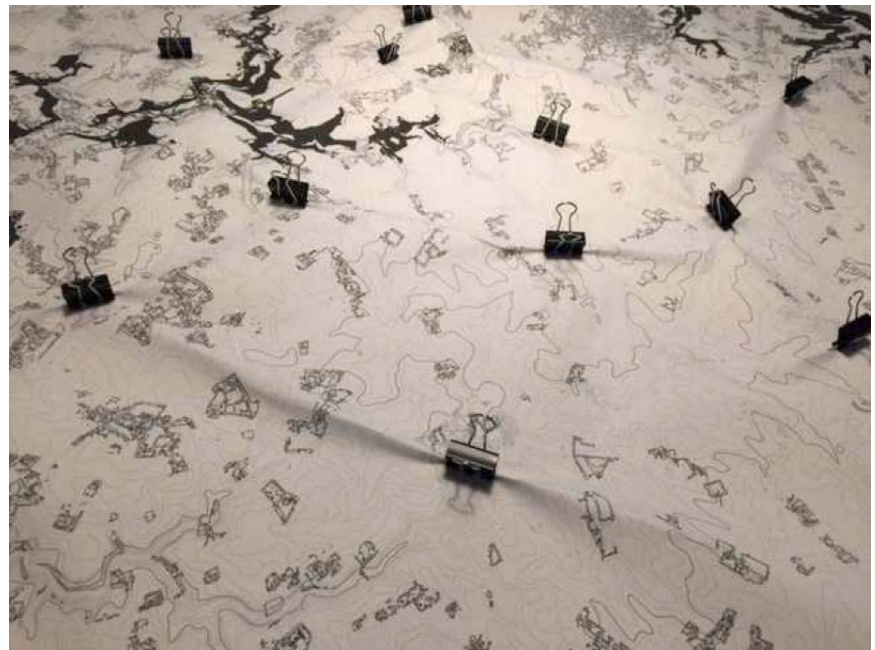


Figure 3.5  
Karin Helms.  
Normandy  
landscape  
exhibited  
ADAPT  
2016 photo  
© Katharine  
Heron





expect the situation to get any better.

The previously published research of the Work Foundation<sup>56</sup> also offers good insights over two decades or more, and links with government research and the effect of the recession. It also points to the future importance of Digital Economies to be embedded in the Creative Economies and becoming an integrated part of all aspects of creative industries.<sup>57</sup>

These and other commissioned researches demonstrate the value of the creative industries, but there is little reference to the core creativity, inception of ideas, the imagination and invention, and the need for its recognition and nourishment. This short essay explores some of the conditions that enable productive creativity in design and architecture where the client, their commission and the critical context all play a part. As educators, architects, designers, and critics we continue to explore ways nurture creativity and enable the realization to benefit for the creative practitioner and for a wider public and to contribute to benefit society as a whole.

But the reality is that creative practitioners need more than the attributes of talent and ideas – they need finance and time, direction and space, enhanced skills, and recognition by peers and a wider public. In short, they need the right context. We shall look at Client (ideas and risk), Critique and ‘the Crit’ (or peer review), and Commission and Exposition (or outreach and dissemination). These conditions are explored in more depth and while not intended to be exhaustive, may provide insight to the conditions that enable creativity for an architect, or designer.

#### ADAPT-r<sup>58</sup>

The ADAPT-r project has been one way of nurturing and developing creative practitioners by providing fellowships that support research into their own practice, exposing hidden depths, discovering Tacit Knowledge and describing it to others. And through this dissemination of research findings, feed more into the collective knowledge.

ADAPT-r focuses on Creative Practitioners in Small and

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.theworkfoundation.com>. The Work Foundation was set up in 2002 building on the legacy of The Industrial Society set up in 1918 to improve the quality of working life through advocacy, research and practical interventions.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Staying ahead and the UK Creative Industries’ published 2007, followed by the ‘Creative Block’ published in 2010.

<sup>58</sup> A full description of ADAPT-r is <http://adapt-r.eu>

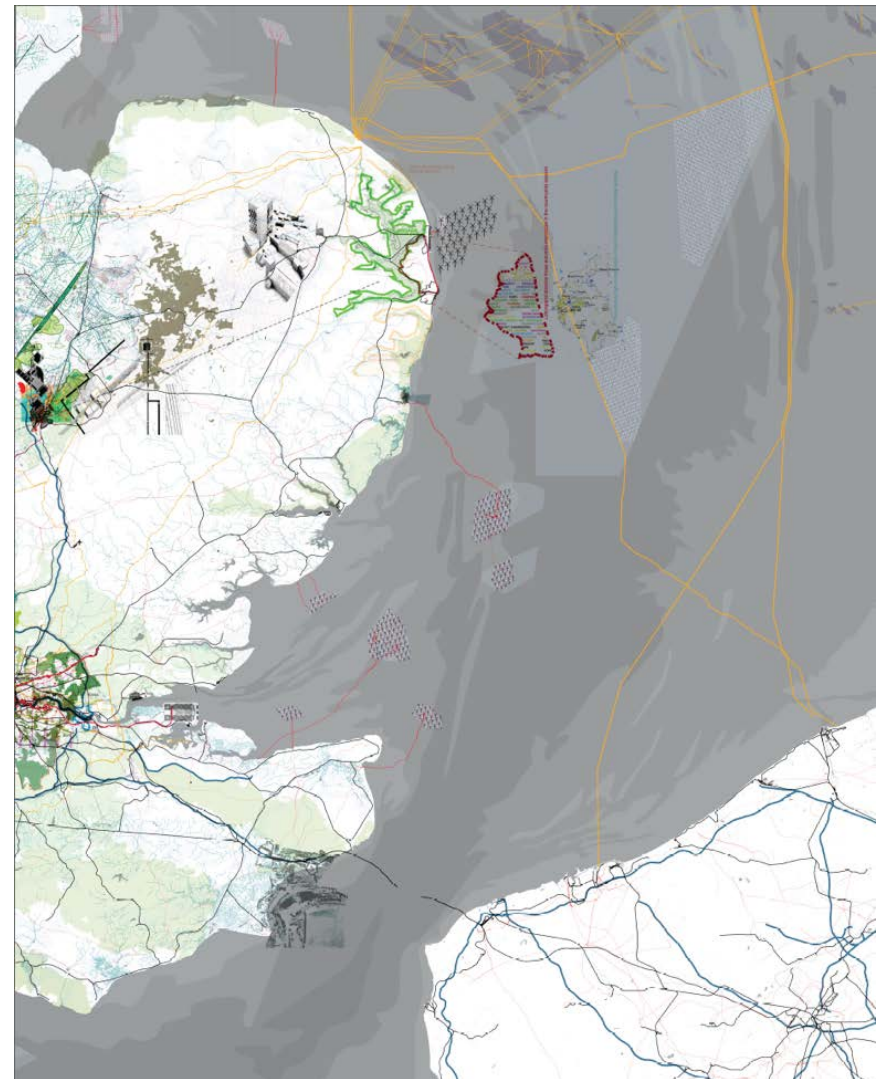


Figure 3.6  
Tom Holbrook:  
5th Studio's  
speculative  
approach to  
working in the  
context of East  
Anglia © Tom  
Holbrook

Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Small businesses are normally privately owned companies, partnerships, or sole proprietorships. What businesses are defined as “small” in terms of government support and tax policy varies depending on the country and industry. In the UK the definition of medium is under 50 employees and less than £25m turnover or assets under £12.5m. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills estimated that at the start of 2014, 99.3% of UK private sector businesses were SMEs, with their £1.6 trillion annual turnover accounting for 47% of private sector turnover.

While in the arts these will usually be individual solo practitioners with some examples of collaborative practice, in architecture the great majority are SMEs. About 45% of registered architects (28,894 in England and Wales in 2015) are sole principals, or employ five qualified staff or less (source: RIBA). The 2011 census in England and Wales showed that there were 54,000 people calling themselves artists, and research by the Paying Artists Campaign in 2014 showed that the average income from their creative practice is £10,000 pa.

Returning to the early work of the Work Foundation lead by Will Hutton, he presented a ‘bull’s-eye’ diagram in which he showed at the centre the most creative being the most anarchic creative people artists/designers and in the outer rim he located *the* successful creative industries in terms of wealth generation, with new corporate creativity. It follows that the small enterprise is at the centre and the largest at the edge, and the centre must survive in order to feed the edge and the edge is dependent on the centre for its quality.

This ‘centre’ is vulnerable and is like to be very fragile and precarious. It needs to be nurtured for its own sake and how it feeds into the greater economy. It is made of clusters of individuals taking personal risks in pursuit of ‘the project’ and new ideas and inventions. It is recognisably anarchic and wilful, and therefore a risk. Risk takers are key to the development of a creative economy, and the wise investors are those who know how a little well placed seed-funding can start something new. At the same time it is full of questioning and doubt, insecurity and at times missing peer review or a supportive community of practice. Missing too is the critical evaluation to hone the project.

In ADAPT-r our interests are in the Creative Practitioner, the individual, and therefore the very centre, and we recognize the ripples that spread out from it. We are looking at the practices of our Fellows and analysing some of their practices in terms of project



*Figure 3.7 Alice Casey and Cian Deegan TAKA. Window 2013. Photo © Alice Clancy*



or client or patron. No practice exists in a vacuum, and architects in particular depend on the client to develop the project, and to whatever its conclusion. Where does this necessary ingredient come from?

At the conclusion of the ADAPT-r project we have gathered some fascinating and comparable case studies from the Fellows – these are recorded in the ADAPT-r deliverables and shown in the concluding exhibition. From ADAPT-r we can look at the client types from the projects undertaken by ADAPT-r Fellows and in the following groupings:

*The self initiated project* - The architectural critic and writer Edwin Heathcote described the idea of the self-initiated project in the Financial Times 24 July 2015 <sup>59</sup> on the occasion of the nomination of architectural collective Assemble for the Turner Prize (which they subsequently won).

*“What has been publicly recognized by the Tate Gallery in this nomination, is familiar to many arts practitioners and some architects over decades since the 60s, but thought to be ‘alternative’ – now it is being recognised as mainstream albeit avant-garde and radical.”*

Amongst the fellows in ADAPT-r we can see this within the work of some practitioners such as Tom Holbrook who develops a project idea and proposal, but it is also core practice of Gitte Juul, Petra Marguc, Michael Wildman and Irene Prieler of Grundstein. For Eric Guibert there is another version of this genre in which he has developed a practice as an architect undertaking small scale developments. He is the developer/client and architect. Karin Helms has initiated a project of recovery of historic landscape in Normandy. Many of these projects develop as main-stream funded projects while others remain self-funded or with small grants.

*The speculative project* - This takes its model from academia, and CJ Lim has taken the speculative project beyond the usual

<sup>59</sup> [https://duckduckgo.com/?q=edwin+Heathcote+FT+24+July+2015&bext=msl&atb=v33-3\\_\\_&ia=web](https://duckduckgo.com/?q=edwin+Heathcote+FT+24+July+2015&bext=msl&atb=v33-3__&ia=web) Heathcote said that this “marked a moment of real significance. Young, widely admired and increasingly influential, Assemble do things differently. They don’t wait for commissions to come to them, they initiate their own projects and work with communities and institutions to create designs of real social value. Then, most of the time, they build the projects themselves, learning as they go. This is very far from the traditional image of the architect as the immaculate intellectual working in a minimalist studio. But at a time when the authority and influence of architects are being eroded and austerity has devastated local-authority and government building programmes, are such collectives the future of progressive architecture?”

Figure 3.8  
Deborah Saunt  
DSDHA  
Covert  
House, South  
Elevation  
2016 photo: ©  
Christopher  
Rudquist



Figure 3.9 Eric  
Guibert House  
in France  
photo: © Eric  
Guibert



Figure 3.10  
Johannes  
Torpe. Agnes  
Cupcakes.  
Photo ©  
Johannes Torpe  
Studios





boundaries in with Studio 8 Architects. With his PhD thesis 'From Smart City to the Food Parliament: an investigation into urban consequences of food transparency',<sup>60</sup> Competition entries are another form of the self-initiated project albeit to a brief, and often un-built project. Willem Tomiste has made a career from this approach. Karin Helms has started a major public landscape consultation project in Normandy linking the changing practices in agriculture with a change in the terrain and noting unintended consequences, and Tom Holbrook's practice makes a strong case for the speculative design process being a 'site' for on-going projects of every sort. Many practices enter competitions but surprisingly few have surfaced in this arena.

*The family project* – Many young practices start with the indulgence and patronage of family members, and often this work is breath-taking in its originality enabling early ideas to be developed that are often key to later practice. Both TAKA and Eric Guibert cite early family commission while Deborah Saunt who cites examples at the start and at the end in her PhD.

*The individual client or one-off client* – E.g. Clancy Moore, Steve Larkin and Johannes Torpe. Interestingly this category is often thought to be the most fruitful for development of new creative talent, and yet few examples come out of ADAPT-r. There may be a competitive selection process here such as the Dairy House for Niall Hobhouse, by Clancy Moore; or the house at Bogwest by Steve Larkin. The Bakery for Agnes Cupcakes by Johannes Torpe Studios is also self initiated in the sense that the designer is also part of the client. These projects usually funded by the client themselves, and are literally single stakeholder projects.

*The similarly small scale enterprise, organization, a company* – e.g. the Cricket Club or a small advertising or law firm, and interior projects. Here there is likely to be a competitive selection process. It is likely to be funded by the organization concerned who accountable to membership or funding body, and it is possibly grant funded also. e.g. TAKA, Siv Stangeland, Sam Kebbell.

*The corporate client* – While the scale may vary greatly these clients are accountable to others, and may have public funding. Traditionally these are the most risk averse and the least likely to procure innovative work. The examples of clients who procure creative practitioners, are to be applauded and often have an equally creative process to support it e.g. Deborah Saunt, Siv Stangeland, Johannes Torpe.

*The public body /state or quasi public funded body: working to rules*

60 Food City by CJ Lim, published by Routledge in 2014.

Figure 3.11  
Steve Larkin  
Architects,  
House at Bog  
West. photo ©  
Alice Clancy



Figure 3.12  
Siv Helene  
Stangeland,  
Helen and Ard  
Co-living pro-  
ject Vindmøl-  
lebakken 2016,  
© Helen and  
Hard





of public procurement e.g. OJEU <sup>61</sup>rules. These apply to organizations who receive funding from public bodies or Quangos such as EU funding, Lottery etc. Deborah Saunt work for Olympic Park, Tom Holbrook (Lea Valley), Siv Stangeland Library landscape architects Thierry Kandjee and Sebastien Penformis, Siobhán Ní Éanaigh schools

Returning again to the publicity around Assemble, who may have become the symbol for creative practice in art and architecture by being shortlisted for a prestigious arts prize. The writer Rowan Moore says in the Observer<sup>62</sup>

*“If one version of architecture is about the perfection of a finite and permanent object, Assemble see it as a series of events and collaborations, of which building is one. They are in a tradition of architects who prize making and responsiveness over the design of monuments, which also includes Cedric Price and Walter Segal, and perhaps William Morris. “*

At the end of this process, there is no doubt that there is an abundance of creative practice, and many creative practitioners. Their creativity spreads into a realm outside the traditional boundary of that discipline, and into the realm of the self-initiated project where the practitioner may also design the client and project. This new area of creative leadership has huge implications beneficial to change making for social benefit, possibly with wider environmental implications. In the following pages ways are suggested to support practices and bring these innovations to a wider public, and to do this is a context of a developed pattern of critical review to ensure the scrutiny of its quality.

*“I sometimes wonder whether creativity needs boundaries. There is certainly an element of pre-determination in many things but there is also an unforeseen, unpredictable part and that’s where the problem of originality lies.” <sup>63</sup>*

Figure 3.13  
Anna Krec  
SVET VMES  
Architects  
School  
Landscape  
at Ledina  
Grammar  
School Photo:  
© Matevž  
Paternoster



Figure 3.14  
Sam Kebbell  
Kebbell Daish,  
Saatchi &  
Saatchi (2003).  
Queen’s Chain  
photo: © Jono  
Rotman



Figure 3.15  
Johannes Torpe  
Johannes Torpe  
Studios, Bang  
& Olufsen  
Herning  
Denmark  
photo: ©



61 OJEU stands for the Official Journal of the European Union. This is the publication in which all tenders from the public sector which are valued above a certain financial threshold according to EU legislation, must be published. <http://www.ojeu.eu>

62 Observer 6th July 2014

63 ‘Something Rich and Strange ; The Life and Music of Iannis Xenakis ’ BBC film by Mark Kidell in 1991.



Figure 3.16  
Siobhán Ní  
Éanaigh  
McGarry  
Ní Éanaigh  
Architects.  
Coláiste Ailigh,  
Letterkenny,  
Co. Donegal,  
Ireland photo:  
© Richard  
Hatch  
Photography



Figure 3.17  
Siv Helene  
Stangeland,  
Helen &  
Hard Vennesla  
Library with  
redrawing,  
photo: ©



Figure 3.18  
Chris  
Johnstone,  
Bosque Studio  
Australia,  
National  
Arboretum,  
Canberra.  
photo © John  
Gollings

## 3.2 Architect, Commission and Creativity

*Commission – the exposure that a commission affords  
using the example of the Venice Biennale 2014*

*Maria Veltcheva*

### Visiting the Venice Biennale of Architecture 2014

The Venice Biennale organised in the Giardini, Arsenal and in the city, is like an archipelago of exhibition spaces allowing the viewer to circulate, move across the pavilions and share thoughts. For the first time, the 14<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition “Fundamentals” directed by Rem Koolhaas, proposed a single thematic subject for all the national pavilions - “Absorbing Modernity 1914-2014” - giving rise to different interpretations and numerous “creative practice based” visions. In small projects, creativity is freer and events such as biennials, festivals or exhibitions are becoming increasingly popular in architecture, using other materials than those typically used for building or for representing projects. Architecture, in this Biennale, was not represented through architectural installations or models, but was situated in a trans-disciplinary research context, where other artistic disciplines like dance, cinema, art and theatre, which allowed for a variety of reading levels and for different kind of audiences. The Biennale was a laboratory of research, a 6 months exhibition in progress with the idea of continued research after the event, thus presenting some similarities with the main topics and aims of the ADAPT-r research project.

I had the opportunity to visit the 2014 Biennale twice: the opening in June, which was also the beginning of my ADAPT-r Fellowship as Experienced Researcher (ER) and then, before the finissage in November with Michael Mazière<sup>64</sup>, who took the photographs presented in this article, and with my colleague ADAPT-r ER Valentina Signore. In this time, we worked together on the thematic Case studies and Community of Practice for the research

64 Reader in Film and Video and Curator of Ambika P3, Westminster School of Media, Arts and Design, University of Westminster



project. For these reasons, I tried to look at the Biennale through topics such as the Community of Practice or Tacit Knowledge and generally through creativity in the practice.

The Venice Biennale is one of the unique places where Architecture, Commission and Creativity come together and create another dimension: Research in Architecture. This complex event is commissioned by the foundation Labiennale. In the Central Pavilion “Elements of Architecture” curated by OMA, in the Arsenal “Monditalia”, curated by 40 young Italian architects, and in the National Pavilions each country makes its own national commissions - the architectural project and research are expressed in completely different ways because of the several commissions. The commission, and other types of “constraint”, as a catalyst for creativity in architecture and for innovative process of architectural thought, became increasingly a theme for me to explore.

Exploring the architectural creativity in the Venice Biennale, using the ADAPT-r criteria in the Creative Practice Research (CPR), I tried to identify the more “creative” national pavilions, regarding the theme of *Absorbing modernity*. How to explore creativity at the Venice Biennale? What kinds of criteria can one use for exploring this architectural creativity? In the ADAPT-r Project, the medium in the sense of architectural language, could be a part of the Tacit Knowledge. Therefore mapping the different mediums used in the pavilions - archives, photos, videos, models, temporary wooden structures - could be considered criteria for creativity. We can make a long list of “creative” formats, exploring the national pavilions that exhibit creative projects and lead to different kinds of reflections. Despite this idea of analysing, I found later that the purpose was not to classify the pavilions, but rather to understand the role of a commission in creating concepts and “materializing” creativity of projects, and to provide a unique opportunity for the architects to show their work to a huge international audience. I took these observations directly into developing the deliverables and the ADAPT-r exhibition in P3 with Kate Heron and the film “Creative Practice Research” (filmed by Mun Films Barcelona).

The photos that I choose for this chapter illustrate examples of creative projects in architecture commissioned for the Venice biennale “Fundamentals” that consists of three interlocking exhibitions: “Elements of Architecture” in the Central Pavilion, “Monditalia” in the Arsenal and “Absorbing modernity 1914-2014” in the National Pavilions.

The exhibition “elements of architecture (e o a)” in the Central Pavilion curated by Rem Koolhaas/OMA (Figures 3.18, 3.19 and

3.20) is based on a book – a series of 15 volumes as results of a two-year research - that reconstruct the global history and evolution of the 15 architectural elements, close the attention to the fundamentals of our buildings, used by any architect, anywhere, anytime: the wall, the roof, the floor, the ceiling, the door, the window, the fireplace, the toilet, the corridor, the balcony, the façade, the escalator, the elevator, the stair, the ramp. For this exhibition, OMA used different kind of environments - archive, museum, factory, laboratory, mock-up, simulation - to create diverse experiences. The 15 elements are exhibited in 15 several rooms in the Central Pavillion.

Monditalia (Figures 3.21, 3.22 and 3.23) is curated by 40 young Italian architects with Rem Koolhaas. The physical space of the Arsenal is interpreted as an ideal set, imagined as a multidisciplinary work in progress, laboratory in research, learning platform, involving other Venice Biennale festivals – Film, Dance, Music, Theatre – “scanning” the regions of Italy from South to North.

Continuing the visit through the National Pavilions, I thought how different countries and designers choose to exhibit architecture in the context of “Absorbing modernity 1914-2014”.

The pavilions of USA and Russia showed two opposite interpretations of this topic. OfficeUS (Figure 3.24) in putting on stage an office of architecture in the pavilion, exhibits past production and future production, making links between the need for rationality and the architectural solution. This “office” showed the planning and building in a very efficient way of working, that is a part of American work culture and work ethics, exported worldwide. In the Russian Pavilion, “The Fair Enough”, the modern architectural solutions were presented in the form of “An Expo of Ideas”, where each comes along with samples and descriptions to educate visitors on how they adapt to present-day needs (Figures 3.25 and 3.26).

Two other opposite interpretation of “Absorbing modernity 1914-2014” are the pavilion of UK and Germany. In the UK Pavilion the project “A Clockwork Jerusalem” (Figure 3.27) curated by FAT, explored culture and the products of English modernism. The exhibition tried to explain how modernity came about in Great Britain with a narrative and historical approach. The German Pavilion transformed in “Bungalow Germania” (Figure 3.28) itself dialogues with the Kanzlerbungalow built in Bonn in 1964: two buildings of national and historical relevance facing each other to create an identity between present and past. Architecture presents its role as a political and social subject.

The Exhibition “Modernity: Promise or Menace” in the French Pavilion (Figures 3.29, 3.30 and 3.31) interrogated modernity in

four spaces. Each of them is a way to re-think the relationship between life and architecture. The exhibition reflected the complexity of the research answering to the topic *Absorbing Modernity 1914-2014*, curated by Jean-Louis Cohen. The exhibition and the several interpretations of the same topic was characterised by different scales and formats of creativity in the practice: archives, film and photographs, printed designs, models and visual art installation (Figure 3.32 - 3.36).

The last pavilion that I visited was the Italian Pavilion, where the exhibition “Innesti-Grafting” (Figure 3.37) was curated by Cino Zucchi, showing the projects like in a landscape and defining a “mental space”. Through this interpretation is to understand the modernization in Italy and its “stratified” territory, showing that “stratification” remains one of the structural aspects of the Italian architecture and in the same time of the creativity in the Italian architectural practice. Here I participated with the video “Think Energy Roma-EUR” in the video installation “Inhabited Landscape” (Figure 3.38) curated by Studio Azzurro. It was for me an opportunity to situate my work in a new context and to find other paths of reflections in my research. During my ADAPT-r Fellowship in the University of Westminster, I worked also on my research project “Think Energy Urban Projects” and “Think Energy London”, imagining a new kind of commission that helped me to experiment new paths of research and develop them. Some of the ADAPT-r fellows also had participated at the Venice Biennale of Architecture. Karli Luik/Salto participated in 2008 at the Estonian Exhibition with the project Gas Pipe. Siv Hellen Stangeland also showed in the Norwegian Pavillion, and Richard Blythe in the Australia Pavillion.

Based on these personal experiences of visiting the Venice Biennale and attentive to how architecture is expressed in this exhibition, I reflect in the next parts of this chapter on how the role of the “commission” and its constraints give rise to the creative processes in architecture.

Figure 3.19  
“Elements of  
Architecture”  
in the Central  
Pavilion  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.20  
Introduction  
Room in  
the Central  
Pavilion  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014

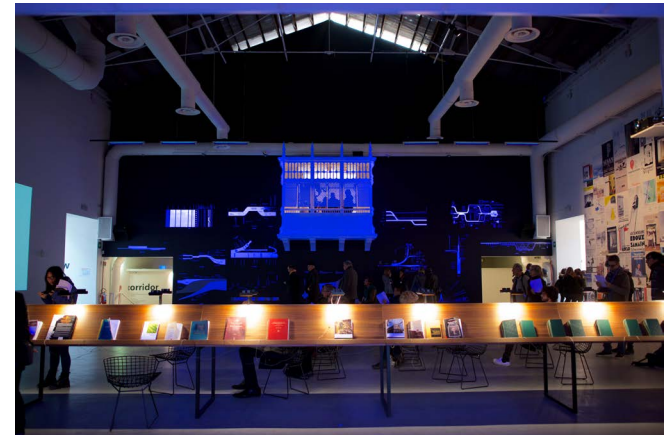


Figure 3.21  
Façade Room  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014





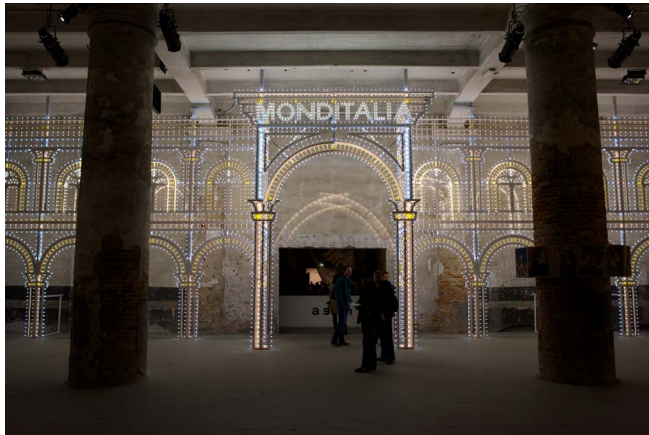


Figure 3.22  
The Entrance of  
Mondoitalia,  
representing  
the South Italy  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.25  
USA Pavilion  
OFFICEUS  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.23  
Mondoitalia,  
screening of  
Italian films  
scanning  
the Italian  
landscapes  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.26  
Russian  
Pavilion. "The  
Fair Enough.  
An Expo of  
Ideas." like a  
trade exhibiton  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.24  
Mondoitalia  
and the long  
exhibit space  
like a metaphor  
from the  
geography of  
Italy © Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.27  
A "stand" in  
the Russian  
Pavilion  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014





Figure 3.28  
UK Pavilion,  
*A Clockwork  
Jerusalem*,  
curated by FAT  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.31  
French  
Pavilion:  
Model of the  
house in the  
famous film  
"My Uncle" of  
Jacques Tati  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.29  
German  
Pavilion:  
*Bungalow  
Germany*  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014

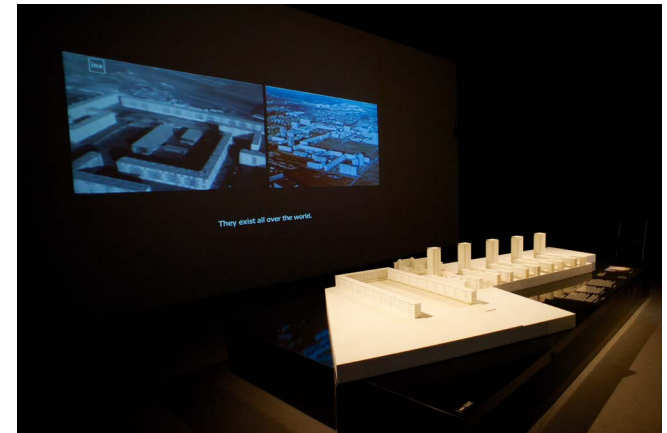


Figure 3.32  
French  
Pavilion:  
documentary  
films and  
cinema and  
the historical  
interpretation  
of architecture  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.30  
French  
Pavilion  
"Modernity:  
Promise or  
Menace?" ©  
Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.33  
*Mondoitalia*,  
curated and  
designed by 40  
young Italian  
architects, show  
the creativity  
expressed  
in details  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



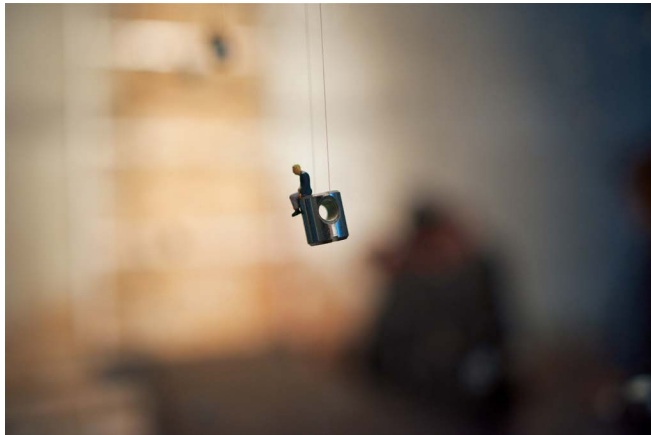


Figure 3.34  
Mondoitalia:  
Creative  
practice in a  
very small scale  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014

Figure 3.37  
The exhibition  
concept is  
similar to  
a museum's  
exhibition  
(Turkey  
Pavilion. Places  
of Memory)  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.35  
Creativity  
expressed in the  
typical format  
of architectural  
projects archive.  
(Japanese  
Pavilion. In  
the real world)  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014

Figure 3.38  
The exhibition  
"Innesti-  
Grafting" in  
the Italian  
Pavilion  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.39  
Italian  
Pavilion:  
"Inhabited  
Landscape",  
video-  
installation  
by Studio  
Azzurro, 2  
stills (4th  
and 14th)  
of the video  
"Think Energy  
Rome-EUR"  
by Maria  
Veltcheva  
and Gerardo  
Marmo ©  
Michael  
Mazière, 2014



Figure 3.36  
Creativity  
expressed in  
the exhibition  
using wall  
pictures in a  
3-dimensional  
perception  
(Spain  
Pavilion.  
Interior)  
© Michael  
Mazière, 2014



### Commission and Constraints

The architect needs specific and concrete constraints in order to create an architectural project. In his attempts “Write from left to right”<sup>65</sup> Umberto Eco explains his method of writing novels. The novel is governed by the Latin rule *Rem tene, verba sequuntur* – “Hold the subject, the words will follow” – such a principle can be translated into architectural language “Hold the concept and the shape of the architectural project will follow!”. In the novel, the starting point is a seminal idea or image, subsequently, it is the construction of the narrative world that determines the style of the novel. For Umberto Eco, once he finds a seminal image, the narrative can move forward by itself. We can translate this again in the architectural language: once we found the concept, the project can advance by itself. This is only true up to a certain point. To allow the story to advance the writer should set certain constraints, the same applies to the architect working on a project.

*“The constraints are fundamental in any artistic enterprise. A painter who decides to use the oils rather than tempera, canvas rather than a wall, a composer who opts for a particular tone, a poet who chooses to write in rhyming couplets, or Alexandrian, all establish a system of constraints. Like the avant-garde artists, who seem to avoid constraints, but actually build others that go unnoticed.”*<sup>66</sup>

The parallels between creative writing and creativity in architecture are obvious. The constraints for an architect and for the development of a project may be climatic, geographic, normative, legislative, urban, economic, social, cultural, political, technical, etc. On top of objectively visible and traditional constraints, stand over “invisible” constraints. The latter pertain to the architect’s own creative world and concepts, representing his or her tacit knowledge. These “invisible” constraints are specific to the architectural project and determine the language of architecture.

In the architect’s project there is always an idea of construction. The architect normally constructs buildings and the constraints s/he faces in the advancement of a project are related to the notion of construction and remain specific to its discipline. This notion of construction is still present in the research work of the architect,

65 Umberto Eco, “Confession of a young novelist”, Harvard University Press, 2011 (original title) Umberto Eco, “*Confessions d’un jeune romancier*”, ed. Grasset, Livre de poche, 2013 (Transl. in French)

66 Idem.

and we can observe it, for instance, in the ADAPT-r PhD research works.

Constraints are frequently given by a commission: location, budget, time, construction techniques, urban forms, master plan, etc. We can say that each commission has its own constraints. In this respect, the commission has an active role in the development of the architectural project in the creative act and so it is often decisive. The architect, despite his/her own criteria, responds to the constraints of a commission. The latter could force the architect to give him/her a topic, as in the architectural competition, and thereby influence the underlying concept, the seminal idea.

In our practice, we often design projects that are not built. But they are all meant for a specific place, customer and commission. The architect’s concepts are linked to places, users and functions. If there are no such conditions – real or imaginary – the project does not take place.

### Creativity

What is a creative project in architecture? Why do some architectural projects appear more creative than others? Why in certain cases a functional/technological building (shopping mall, airport, hospital) is creative and an architectural project (museum, library, opera house) is not? The issue is what is creative in architecture, particularly in a scientific/structural/engineering context and in the visual art/formal context. Creative projects or buildings require the visitors to imagine a vision and do not offer them a defined interpretation.

We saw previously that another way to develop and shape creativity in architecture is the commissioning process. In the Venice Biennale the commission is one of the catalysts of the creativity, providing opportunities to make architectural installation and artefacts, but at the same time it is not to be confused with the creative act itself.

*“The creative writers should never provide interpretations of their works. A text is a lazy machine that requires its readers to do some of the work. In other words, a device designed to elicit interpretations.”*<sup>67</sup>

This remark by Umberto Eco, could be translated into architectural language, saying that creative architects should not explain their buildings. In fact, in most cases, they do not explain them

67 Idem



in relation to their creative act, but explains them in relation to the use, to the used techniques, in relation to the urban or social contexts, etc. “How to understand the unpredictable course of any creative process. Understanding the creative process also means understanding how certain textual solutions are arrived at by serendipity or as a result of unconscious mechanisms.”<sup>68</sup> Architecture is a creative act that remains to be investigated, and we try to do so within the ADAPT-r Project.

Architecture is an art that is not sufficiently analysed in relation to his creative process, in relation to its Tacit Knowledge. For instance, a creative practice based project could be the result of a “counterpoint”, like in music. The term originates from the Latin - Punctus contra punctum - meaning “point against point”. It is a relation between two entities, two juxtaposed ideas or concepts, and this relation creates new path of thinking. Putting together a new function in an old building, a museum in a recovered industrial building, the result is a creative act due to a “counterpoint”. Furthermore, the architect works not only for the visible parts of a building, but often there is a part of the architectural project that remains invisible to the visitors or to the users, yet is part of the creativity and the architectural work itself.

In most cases the architect cannot create in a void, her/his project needs a real context, because s/he thinks in terms of place and users. But if one assumes that artistic creativity could be a useful and necessary exercise for that ability, which is always seeking new strategies to adapt to the world<sup>69</sup>, in this period of star system, globalization and standardization of construction techniques, the architect is less free to use her/his own language and needs new kinds of commissions to allow new forms of creativity.

<sup>68</sup> Idem

<sup>69</sup> Emilio Garroni, *Creatività*, ed. Quodlibet, 1978

## 3.3 Work in Progress

*Kester Rattenbury*

There’s a certain luxury about writing about creativity in the academic framework of the ADAPT-r PhD programme, compared with pretty well any other academic framework I can think of. Discussing the unknown brief and general drift of this piece (is it an essay? An article? A chapter? In what sort of book, aimed at what sort of audience?) with a proper neuroscientist whom I happen to know<sup>70</sup>, I was aware that she was regarding me with amazement and envy. You mean, you can just *write* this? she said, thinking of her own world of carefully validated experiments.

And of course, the vast weight of architectural research and academia would be on the carefully validated experiment side which her discipline demands. The environment where you couldn’t make any kind of real contribution to knowledge without reading a substantial established body of scientifically validated information and well-footnoted sources first. But then, (even neuroscientifically, I think) if I did that, I would necessarily start framing my whole structure of conception about *how* we design in relation to frameworks that already exist *academically* -- rather than trying to simply describe the relatively unknown frameworks that we actually *use* in design -- or in my case, design teaching and criticism<sup>71</sup>. For that is the academic problem of our own field - that while there are well-established methods for design research in theory, there is very little in practice. Research into what designers actually *do* when they design is in surprisingly uncharted waters.

So I’m taking advantage of the relative uncertainty of what this book is, to do my own field research, if you like, into what I myself do, and observe others doing, in teaching and discussing design: in how some parts of it seem to work, in practice. In the great edifice of well-authenticated knowledge, it’s therefore a sort of shaky little twig trying to bridge a gap -- but which perhaps can then be tested,

<sup>70</sup> I am utterly indebted to Dr Anastasia Christakou, Associate Professor in Cognitive Neurobiology at the University of Reading for her exciting and generous discussions of these processes, and for physically passing me the documents she was trying to read herself. More importantly, I would like to absolve her absolutely from my entirely personal speculations, and wilfully untested interpretations, from which this article is composed.

<sup>71</sup> Kester Rattenbury is an architectural critic, writer and teacher and Professor of Architecture at the University of Westminster.

condemned, ignored, replaced, improved, by myself or others. And low though that places this article academically, that questionable metaphor is, just maybe, worth trying. Because maybe those speculative, imaginary structures (I'd suggest) seem to be key to how we teach and discuss what architects do.

As the whole of the PhD by Practice / ADAPT-r construct is well used to pointing out, there are some of architecture's peculiar practices and imaginative and real constructions which are so arcane, so common, and so fundamental to the mysterious processes by which we actually design, that we hardly ever talk about them. What, exactly, *is* an architectural project, for instance? It's certainly not just a building -- it's often not a building at all. How do we recognise some buildings (or places, books, art shows) as *being* architecture, while others, somehow don't fit the bill? How does it work? What on earth do we think we're doing?

And how can we (us old lag critics, teachers and practitioners, in particular) do all this so *quickly*? How can a selection of people -- more or less expert -- come together, look at a few pictures and other bits and pieces, listen to a short presentation, and decide so fast, and often so collectively, whether the assembly of pictures and models in front of them 'is' architecture? Whether it's going well? How can a group of people look at, say a collection of drawings made by dripping and flicking ink, strange objects made by pouring concrete into tights, and audio pieces (that was one of our students from last year<sup>72</sup>) and collectively agree to talk in detail about the M&E servicing strategy? What on *earth* is going on in the architectural crit?

If you were a philosopher, or somebody studying the neuroscience of learning (I'm reliably informed) you might recognise this as the vast uncharted territory of how the brain actually works. I've been pointed to Nelson Goodman's ideas about our extensive use of real and unknown other worlds<sup>73</sup>. Architects discuss this, too. But Andy Clark's paper on the theory that brains are 'essentially prediction machines', which 'offer a unifying model of perception and action, illuminate the functional role of attention, and may neatly capture the special contribution of cortical processing to

72 Kester Rattenbury teaches an MArch design studio with Sean Griffiths at the University of Westminster, where both of them are Professors of Architecture. Some of Design Studio 15's current and past work can also be found on the student blog, <http://designstudiofifteen.wordpress.com>. The student mentioned here was Miranda Hammond.

73 Goodman, Nelson: Words, Works, Worlds. *Erkenntnis* (1975-) Vol 9, no 1 (May 1975). pp 57-73. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20010456>

Figure 3.40  
DS 15 Crit,  
University of  
Westminster  
2014, Pip  
Phillips  
presenting.



Figure 3.41  
DS 15 Crit,  
University of  
Westminster  
2014, Simon  
Shillito  
presenting



adaptive success'<sup>74</sup> was new to me. According to Clark, the 'one of the brain's key tricks, it now seems, is to implement dumb processes that correct a certain kind of error'; part of a 'hierarchical prediction machine' model, which offers 'the best clue yet to a unified science of mind and action.' 'Perception, action and attention, if these views are correct, are all in the same family business.'<sup>75</sup> I'm way out of my depth here, of course, but I have a strong architect's instinct that I'm on home territory.

Because if you are an architect, or somewhere in the same zone (and if you're reading this book, you probably are) all this speculation about guesswork and imagination, provisional imaginary structures and other worlds sounds *normal*. That's exactly how student projects work. And crits are just what you *do*. You pin up your works, present it to your tutors, their guests and your student colleagues, and have a discussion. Some are crazy events, some are straightforward and 'realistic'. Sometimes it's a good crit, sometimes a bad one. Sometimes the critics are great, sometimes they don't get it. It's obvious, isn't it?

Well, yes, if you've done it often enough. But the whole process is a very intense and important part of the strange kind of skills which we teach and gradually absorb and sublimate and keep on using, in architectural schools. I suspect it's something of a motor skill, like learning to drive: learned through doing, sublimated and almost impossible to consciously describe. I remember, distinctly, as a stropky eighteen-year old, thinking that the whole arcane, masonic architectural teaching process --the inexplicable project brief, the weird hours, the fact that you're bound to be both working and celebrating on a completely different timetable to everyone else -- was a deliberate indoctrination process: one designed to cut you off from normal people.

I was right of course: it *is* an indoctrination process - but I would now say it is an intelligent and benign one. Of course I would, as a fully indoctrinated and participating cult member. And one that, through the very useful framework of the PhD by Practice/ADAPT-r emerging academic construction, I can at least now *describe*, however imperfectly, in some working detail.

I've previously tried to describe -- just to describe, rather than



Figure 3.42  
RMIT/  
ADAPT-r PhD  
Examination,  
Ghent, 2014,  
Tom Holbrook  
presenting.

74 Clark, Andy: Whatever Next? Predictive Brains, Situated Agents, and the Future of Cognitive Science. *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* (2013) 36, 181-253 Cambridge University Press 2013.

75 Clark, op cit.



theorise about -- how we teach students architectural design<sup>76</sup>. About why we use such strange methods and what they're for -- even just what they *are*: what we're actually doing every week of the teaching year -- and that, I realise, is weird enough. The argument I generated (that fantasy, chance-driven and deliberately disruptive design projects were useful in simulating the unpredictable conditions of real architectural life) was, as I confessed, driven by the brief I was given to write about buildings sites, on which I had otherwise little to say. It was a self-fulfilling, improvised construct -- but that doesn't mean it was necessarily *wrong*. Indeed, developing and testing self-fulfilling, more or less improvised constructs sounds rather like what we try to teach architecture students to do. Something a bit like design.

And so the fact that I have almost accidentally collected -- and certainly misread -- a little real neurological source material to at least add to the footnotes, in the next step of my speculative constructions about how we design -- is a very architectural technique. (I am deliberately exposing how unacademically I'm doing it.) Because the very un-academic, improper use of proper academic references -- the freedom to use and misuse -- is one of our native architectural working processes or tools: we get student to do it all the time (in and out of crits) to make trial comparisons, however imperfect they may be. It happens, too in our normal, casual but intense use of metaphor -- which is more precisely called, by linguists, a 'calculated category error'<sup>77</sup>. These sorts of things are fast, valuable, imprecise and very generative tools in how we do our speculative constructions -- how we teach, predict, mimic, and do design. The mixture of guesswork, instinct, knowledge, analogy and testing is exactly what we are, at least in part, teaching each other to do, as architects, teachers and critics.

And as someone involved with the utterly addictive RMIT/Adapt-r PhD by Practice -- a fantastic exploration, extension and development of our innate design methods to academic level -- I now find myself utterly hooked on this curious and unexpected form of architectural navel-gazing; writing and talking unmercifully (sorry, readers) about just what it is we are all taking for granted in the practice and teaching of design. Just what a very strange and complicated assembly of skillsets - instinctive, learned,

technical, cultural, cognitive processes and abilities we all take for granted. How very sophisticated we are at using them. And how very little is known about how this works, inside or outside the profession.

As you probably all know, the basic crit type goes something like this. At key stages in a student design project, the students present their work. It's also called a pin-up, though it might include models, projections, installed pieces, sound pieces, movies, computer models, as well as pictures. The pictures vary too -- they could be sketches, careful refined architectural drawings, vast bits of mad painting, technical details, computer graphics or photos of the site, or any combination of these. It is, to say the least, a mixed media presentation. An assembly of very different stuff.

And that unpredictable combination keeps growing. There's the student's presentation, which can range from the dutiful description to brilliant speculative self-analysis. Or it can collapse altogether, with the student corpsing or bursting into tears, without materially upsetting the process. And there's the more or less unpredictable reaction of the ad-hoc assembly of (often unpaid) critics -- the tutors, competing tutors, friends, easily available experts, and occasional, bewildered 'real' clients.

As the PhD by Practice recognises, in its own formalised versions, this assembly makes up a kind of performance of the project, working in a composition of very different forms. And some architectural students, the more confident ones, deliberately push this to extremes. In one of my first crits, as a student, a friend chopped up his own work with an electric jigsaw -- he'd been asked to study the Italian Futurist Sant'Elia, so he was doing his best to destroy the architectural past<sup>78</sup>. And last year, one of our students, who'd decided his very brilliant, very extreme experimental work (painted on bedsheets, done in the manner of late Philip Guston artworks, and using insulation foam structurally) *wasn't* working, ran a video of his verbal presentation and started painting over his own work<sup>79</sup>. OK, it sounds like I'm talking about a certain kind of madcap crit here -- but essentially, these are the same thing as the ones where a student presents and explains a highly realistic building proposal using hardline drawings and carefully made models.

What's being discussed in student crits is not, of course, not a

76 Rattenbury, Kester, Trial and Error, ViceVersa 2: The Building Site, 2015. Online publication, <http://www.zeroundiciup.it/2015/07/01/viceversa-2-the-building-site/op cit>.

77 See Ricoeur, Paul: *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language*, Routledge 2004.

78 This was Phil Campbell, who went on to become creative director on interactive entertainment blockbusters including James Bond, the Godfather and Tomb Raider gaming structures, to design Legoland, and much more. See [PhilCampbellDesign.com](http://PhilCampbellDesign.com)

79 This was James John Clifford Rogers. Watch this space.



built building -- students don't often get to do those. But it will develop into a sort of *pretend* building -- or something we agree to be roughly equivalent: a strategy, an artwork, a 'narrative' or overtly fantastical 'speculative' project. It will always (in some more or less specified way) be expected to meet some kind of technical criteria as well as social, aesthetic or other drivers. And those points will possibly be in the institution's course document. But really, in my experience, it's some kind of coherent, organising *idea* which is roughly what we're looking for - as being what can make it architecture.

That is an idea of almost any sort (social, technical, aesthetic...) which can be used to pull all this divergent material together, and then to make decisions about how to develop and conclude this pretend building: to choose the shape or material, the relation of a window to a view, the openness or closeness, the proportion, for instance; a relatively detailed projection of how it's made. We're looking to see if the student can *assemble* a coherent unbuilt building, in their imagination, to develop and test it in the vast range of available representations, and their infinite recombinations, and how well they might be able to do it. I'd say it's the relationship of the idea (whatever it is) to the designed or built project that makes it architecture -- at least in the environment in which I seem to be working, and given how easily people from other creative disciplines - artists, musicians and so on can join any crit or PRS without turning a hair, I would say (from my own limited experience but as part of an extensive informal and international network, it is common across at least one broad strand of the creative disciplines.

Now, especially in the early stage crits, (in schools like ours<sup>80</sup>, where a project last a whole academic year) the students don't know what they're designing. They're doing exercises their tutors set them, and they haven't taken control of them yet. They often haven't been given (they may never be given) a brief, or a site. The critics are helping them find what project might be drawn out of the work they've already done.

But the (normally unspoken) reality is the *tutors* don't know what the students are designing either. A design project is *not* a

predetermined set of learning outcomes, or a right answer (though there's a surprising amount of agreement, between even very dissimilar critics, about what's good, or interesting, and why). We don't know what the students are going to do, until they try. And *then* we can assess the work, suggest, direct, explain what they might do next. It's an iterative process.

And that means that crit process is a form of constructive feedback for the *tutors* too, who then change and amend the briefs or exercises or general shape to the project they're setting. To try to guide this unknown mass of unbuilt architecture into a recognisable, markable architectural project. Whatever that is. Or is collectively agreed to be, at any given time and place. Because like language itself, architecture -- even as a definition -- is a changing construct.

Though it probably doesn't feel like it, the critics are actually - and both individually and collectively showing students what to do. They -- and I mean we -- are looking at the work, noticing things about it and making working suggestions for how to develop it. We're constructing a rough, quick, working idea in our heads from their material: a shape, a relationship, a way of living, a construction method - whatever we think the project might be -- and then we're quickly describing and discussing those imagined versions. We are doing it ourselves as experienced people, rather as a potter might show you how to throw a pot, or a driving instructor activate a dual control in a teaching car<sup>81</sup>. There are an awful lot of people's imagined situations and places -- those 'other worlds' and 'virtual versions' -- hovering in the air, even in the relative short space (twenty to forty minutes, say) of an average crit. We don't call it a design project -- something drawn out and projected -- for nothing.

If I say it's quite hard being a critic, I'm giving the wrong impression. It's incredibly stimulating and fun - but boy, do you have to concentrate. Former students, who come back to crit are always surprised by this. It can seem impossible at the beginning of each student presentation -- like trying to *think* about how you drive rather than just doing it -- and then somehow the eye and

80 This article is based on my experience in what David Greene of Archigram called the 'Monster Factory' type of schools of architecture -- those which privilege experimentation and lateral thinking over tradition. I make a working distinction between the other type prominent in the UK -- the Canon schools: those emphasising a strong tradition in refined and continuous knowledge. Both in fact similar techniques of project development, but the emphasis and value structures applied to them are different. This is also discussed in Trial and Error, op cit.

81 I'm conscious of how these metaphors work to immediately make different ways of imagining these connections, and how one instinctively assesses whether they 'feel' right, and therefore may be worth using to develop and test the analogy further. I am also of course aware of the many, and very fundamental cases where architectural terms (arch is used metaphorically, specially in areas like literature, computer science and general practice - and neuroscience (architecture of the brain, or constructions, say. See Sporns, O, 2007, quoted in Clark, Andy, op cit p195).

brain and memory and projective instinct start working together, and you're off. And after one crit -- twenty minutes, or forty, say -- when you've constructed a whole series of possible options, you start again with completely different student and work. It makes your head reel.

In part, all of us different critics asking *common* architectural project questions. What does the work look like? What kind of designer is this person? Are they skilled? Have they been busy? Are they in control? Are they experimenting? Do they understand the territory? What is it *like*? Do they know how to build this? And how does all this relate to what they are *saying* about it -- are they right? What does it add up to? Have they 'got' a project?

Any of the more measurable questions immediately shade off into the unmeasurable: into accidental but still real innovation, speculations, guesses. Into the workings of that unknown and always changing prediction machine. Actual metrics, my passing neuroscientist observes, seem to be curiously absent from the whole process.

It's not just the 'what is this like?' that we're looking for, either, but 'what kind of connections join them?' A type of space, for instance; a point in history; an aesthetic sense; a technical innovation? In my experience, these *unseen* connective ideas are far harder to pinpoint than the *visual* or physically manifest ones. An awful lot of what goes on in crits emphasises the instincts attached to visual reactions, both real and imagined, exercising and developing a practiced instinct, and shifting cultural codes. And an awful lot more relates to things we attach to visual things, but can't necessarily see - like sense of space, climate conditions, time, and so on. Pretty big stuff to deal with in ten or fifteen minutes of hotly contested debating time.

And to do all this we're drawing from a vast, collective, imaginary Wikipedia -- an unrestricted, unreliable library - of buildings, projects, technical knowledge, books, experiences, half-remembered ideas, and virtually anything else we can come up with -- in our separate and collective heads. You'll often hear critics ask each other -- even people they've only just met -- things like: 'what's that self-build project in Mexico...? What's the name of the bloke who did the wobbly hill with the cars on? Who's the artist who made the room out of polystyrene? Which is the church where the columns rest on cushions? How high is the inversion layer?'

It can all look and sound like -- and partly is -- showing off. But the critics are also constructing a kind of collective, provisional platform from which to assess and direct this project; drawing on

and negotiating a great cloud of partly-shared knowledge to form a kind of perspective point, or series of perspective points, from which to imagine and discuss this unreal construction. A real crit, with from two (minimum) to about ten critics on the panel, would have an un-illustrably vast range of combinations of these comparison projects -- each one chosen, at least partly, in reference to what other people are choosing -- as well as to the student's work<sup>82</sup>. So that when the PhD by Practice programme asks its candidates to try to pin down some of the key buildings, projects, places, which shaped their spatial, aesthetic or social memory, they're really just scratching the surface.

Critics often start -- also visibly -- making constructions from the work *against* how the student is presenting it. They get up to look at one drawing while the student is trying to show them something else. That's partly another performance by the critics -- as well as a real and instinctive divergence from the student's line of approach. Or we might turn a drawing another way round, or start playing with a model. This is another useful form of showing off: sometimes playing with a model shows *immediately* that a building is too big or in the wrong place. We do it *before* we can analyse and explain why it's wrong (aesthetically, practically, socially or whatever). Indeed, that's how we test it. In our well practiced, represented worlds, it looks wrong, and you immediately change it till it looks right. You work out, retrospectively, what makes it right or

82 There are vague families of references types, belonging to different types of schools of design. As someone from the 'Monster Factory' school of teaching - the experiment first type I'm aware that I'm immediately off limits at Canonic schools because what seem like absolutely core references for us -- say, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown -- are beyond their pale. Of course, these limits also shift with time, fashion and cultural concerns, economic climate and so on.

wrong by doing it, in this play form.<sup>83 84</sup>

So if crits are, (partly), masterclasses in how to look for, and recognise, and imaginatively extend, architectural qualities and opportunities, in students' own work, the critics are (partly) *demonstrating* how to do this. That showing off is, it turns out, broadly functional. Even the most arrogant assertions are intended to be part of an individual and mutual construction showing how to design -- as well as a possible iteration of the kind of project a student might do. It is, believe it or not, a generous, collective act.

Not that it feels like it, on the ground. I distinctly remember as a new student, being shocked and horrified by the whole process. I still deal with students suffering from post-crit horrors. Crits can be confrontational. They're not always fair. And setting academic protocol aside for a moment, maybe they're not really meant to be. It's normal currently, in my experience, for them to be divorced from the marking process -- and probably for these very reasons.

For crits are volatile entities, depending not 'just' on the work, but how it's been selected; printed, pinned up, explained (which are legitimate things for academic standards to demand) and on far more unpredictable and sometimes explosive ones (which are more or less entirely outside the student's control). On the unknown chemistry generated between the critics; the time of day, the competition (who's presenting at the same time in the next space), the personal prejudices of the critics -- which are an integrated part

83 To pinch a possibly relevant quote to follow from one of my purloined documents for further study: 'As strange as it sounds, when your own behaviour is involved, your predictions not only precede sensations, they determine sensation.' Hawkins and Blakeslee, 2004 p 158, quoted in Clark, op cit.

84 This essay was written in the spirit of the PhD by Practice's own methodological investigations, by attempting to carefully describe methods and forms of 'tacit knowledge' in my own long experience as critic. It then became the basis of a lecture delivered around New Zealand, generating a great deal of debate amongst critics using the same methods on the other side of the world. Through the sometimes heated debates it generated, I was drawn back to existing research on crits, and observed that almost all of this, in itself fairly recent, body of research was about the failures of crits as means of feedback for the student - which I believe is not their true function. An interesting strand of research which is an exception to this is based on analysis of videos of crits and identifies a particular use of hand movements and gestures used by critics roughly to demonstrate the spatial qualities of buildings both commonplace or present - the building in which the crit is being held - and those of 'high' architecture', and thereby arguably to teach students to bring their own instinctive spatial or environmental intelligence to the 'great' architecture to which they are being introduced. See Keith Michael Murphy, Jonas Ivarsson, Gustav Lymer 'Embodied reasoning in architectural critique', *Design Studies*, Volume 33, Issue 6, November 2012, Pages 530-556.

Figure 3.43  
DS 15,  
University of  
Westminster,  
Crit Panel,  
2015, James  
John Clifford  
Rogers  
presenting.



of this highly informalised process. And maybe most of all, on the critics' necessarily partial capacity to understand the student's project. Which, I'm hoping to have made clear by now, is a fundamentally imaginary and unmeasurable construction.

But boy, are they a learning process (wherever you're sitting). On the one hand, in our strange teaching world of fantasy projects, they provide some of the most realistic bits of professional experience. They can replicate the curveballs that life throws you -- in pitches or planning meetings, say, and even on site. I have a sneaking feeling that being unfair is part of the genetic fingerprint which has allowed them to survive. Like our weird, fantasy projects they are teaching a complex relationship of *useful* skills which we find it difficult to quantify and describe.

So the reasonable sounding, metric-like zone of crits might be that they demand and test the ability to present and debate under pressure. But it shades off immediately into an amorphous cloud of cultural knowledge, and into the even less charted areas of how we recognise, describe, assess, reject, approve, develop and test, an architectural design, individually and collectively, in our imagination.

And on top of that, they exemplify how entirely the capacity to design, to describe, criticise and test design are *integrated*. Because that capacity to project the outcome - to see, imagine, in immense detail, an as-yet-unreal physical built (social, technical, climatic, aesthetic) situation, and consider how it works -- depend on your capacity to keep standing back and criticising it, as you go along. Of course I would say this, as a critic, but you can't really seem to do one, very well, without the other.

Which is not easy, in a demanding, pressurised and terrifying world in which architecture is driven, perhaps principally, to be a form of economic speculation - forces which are terribly hard to stand back from. Which I guess is why so many good designers keep teaching, or come to crits, while in practice -- because it activates their own critical development. They get something out of it, as working architects. And it accounts in part for the booming professional popularity of the PhD by which also (under another name) seems to provide evidence of how deeply criticism and design are integrated.

Nobody told me, when I first came to the PhD by Practice PRS weekends, that it was a great, international weekend crit, held between working practitioners at the highest level. That spreadsheet timetable, packed with names and initials and numbers, meant less than nothing to me: a graphic block of unknown bureaucratic

code<sup>85</sup>. It was only afterwards, and when I started thinking about the astonishing range of fantastic work: of all kinds of types, from all over the world, and seen as work in progress -- that incredibly intimate, privileged and exciting potential state for architects -- that I realised that that was what they were.

Well, partly. Because 'normal' student crits have, traditionally, grown in those pockets of academic freedom generated where many people don't know, and can't quantify, what we're doing. The Practice Research Symposia (PRS) is in many ways, the opposite. It's an attempt to define, refine -- even legislate for -- at least some parts of this process. It involves eye-wateringly complicated academic and bureaucratic constructions, especially, I believe, in the ADAPT-r model which has to work through a network of international partner institutions, each with their own strict and various bureaucratic requirements and laws, as well as the conditions imposed by their collective EU-Marie Curie grant. You could say that ADAPT-r is a great big working paradox, then: setting up new, replicable bureaucratic academic structures to encapsulate, engender, describe and improve inherently improvisational and unique ones.

But still, the PRS weekends -- the parts where the candidates present work in progress -- do really feel, and work, very much like crits. That's despite the inevitably business-like or lecture-like rooms they're presented in and the inevitable dominance of the powerpoint projection<sup>86</sup> over the physical drawing, model, or of course, the real, though absent, buildings. (In practice, it's only the supervisors and close colleagues who are likely to have seen any of the usually newish buildings under discussion). What make it feel so much like a crit is the sense of seeing into the work in progress; the sense of the panel (and audience members) working so immediately and constructively with the work under discussion: adding it up, testing it, suggesting what might be done with it.

Indeed, though that Powerpoint the normal use of professional photography and the rooms can make the PRS sessions *look* more like a business pitch -- they even be far more intensely and ideally crit-like than student crits ever, actually get to be. I'm thinking especially of the one where Alice Casey, of Taka Architects, exposed their real working process in trying to do a particular kind of slightly perverse concrete work: asking their friends for help;

85 The titles are institutional and acronymic, part of a bit of academic engineering -- precisely part of the careful and cumulative construction of metrics

86 As a working type, Powerpoint is a format I personally love because of the slidesorter; that imaginary and immediate visual sorting tool for constructing any visually-driven argument.



guessing; testing; arguing with contractors, writing legal disclaimers; choosing the best case options. Being 'wilfully naive', Casey called it, showing the ultimate, very successful outcome -- but also pointing out that (in part) they had been expending vast amounts of effort on some parts of the building which would never actually be seen. It was an astonishing exposure of the real architectural skills of improvisation and risk, which seem to be part of the beating heart at the heart of architectural practice -- and which virtually every other normal professional (or perhaps even academic) format would be ruthlessly organised to conceal. There is, *inter alia*, a huge and fundamental sense of mutual trust at the heart of a good crit.

And interestingly, the final PhD exams, which *look* far more like crits (you can see this in photos), don't *feel* or work like them at all. They certainly take the physical form of a crit -- the specific formula of the PhD by Practice submission is composed of three interdependent parts -- a written submission; an exhibit; the candidate's own presentation and then public debate with the critics -- the whole forming a kind of performed composite, very like a crit. But they also have a kind of official, summative status as public, formal examination, and indeed as academic measuring point ('They are filmed, that film forming part of the academic 'durable record' of the PhD. The rules of academic certainty (like professional rules) therefore demand reliable degrees of certainty -- to completion, even though the nature of the work itself is inevitably geared to open up further questions.

Of course, this is a paradox central to all forms of creative education, and indeed all types of academic research. All PhD submissions deal with some version of this inherent paradox; setting out 'areas for future research' and so on, and dependent on Viva examination as well as written and other submissions, and are therefore expressly examined through panels of external academics. But the PhD by Practice exams I've seen: consummate, brilliant, profoundly architectural -- also seem very deeply related to architecture in its professional form. This is not just because jobs - I mean building commissions -- too are sometimes awarded on interview presentations of a related type. It's also because - in the endlessly mutable definition of what makes an architectural project, they feel like a *product*, rather than a part of the process. They are designed to be, and feel like they are, more or less complete. Which, shifting back into that metaphorical comparison mode, makes them feel more like a delivered project, a finished job of some sort (people do give these PhDs job numbers) something which has been completed and delivered, than a working crit.

Figure 3.44  
EXP/  
University of  
Westminster:  
Supercrit 5,  
Rem Koolhaas  
presenting,  
2006. David  
Greene  
speaking. Photo  
Babak Niai  
Tizkar



Which is not, by the way, intended as any sort of a criticism. Architecture is *not* just a process; it is essentially about producing actual *things* -- normally buildings, but books, exhibitions and other things too. But those things feed back into the ongoing design thinking and future work. There's endless discussion (it happens a lot in the marking of student work) as to what is 'process' and what is 'product' in any architectural -- and whether, in fact, it is possible to pull them apart. The crit format, though essentially open ended and a working practice in both its criticism and construction, can *also* become a sort of product -- a deliverable, markable outcome -- but in doing that it stops working like a crit. But it's both of these forms (inevitably, I prefer the open ended one) which the PRS weekends deliver in wonderful, varied, unexpected truckloads.

Of course changing the rules, translating the format of crits (like anything else) does alter what you get. I've already written about the paradoxes we found in our own Supercrit series<sup>87</sup> at the University of Westminster, which worked on the frisson of the idea that famous architects would come back to school, present one of their greatest projects, and have a 'real' crit on it. That frisson means we are all (more or less) hoping for those rare moments of really overt criticism -- like the bit where the inimitable David Greene told Richard Rogers that "your early work was really unbelievably brilliant, but you're going off the boil!"<sup>88</sup>. And that we scarcely notice the milder, but absolutely reciprocal, and entirely remarkable fact that Richard Rogers stood for this, and made a generous, careful answer. He said that there's a difference between imaginary projects and real ones: in the real world, what you can do is often quite minor things<sup>89</sup>.

It's remarkable that his good-tempered participation in this game gained less coverage than the gauntlet which Greene had flung down, and that his office continued to provide enthusiastic and active senior input into the book we made describing the event<sup>90</sup>. We kind of take all this participation for granted. As organisers, we were only partly at surprised at how easy (relatively) it was to get really big names -- Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Richard Rogers, Bernard Tschumi, Rem Koolhaas, Leon

Krier, Michael Wilford (for himself and Stirling) and the mass of worldbeating critics to join in this attempt. After all, it was Cedric Price's idea in the first place, and he was very good at finding a beating pulse.

Because we do seem, as an architectural culture, to see these extraordinary constructions as normal. As Anna Holder, one of the ADAPT-r programme's Experienced Researchers said, after her first PRS conference (I paraphrase) we seem to *need* to see each other presenting and discussing our work, in order to develop our own work, ourselves. The PhD by Practice is surely valuable, in large part, because it does provide just that kind of tough, open ended criticism -- and the ability to watch, imagine, construct it as an audience member for others -- which is a kind of essential part of our unspoken processes of trial and error, failure and refinement. And the products through which we do it -- an occasional form of provisional completion -- keep feeding back into it.

87 Run by Samantha Hardingham and Kester Rattenbury as part of the Experimental Practice research group at the University of Westminster. See [www.supercrits.com](http://www.supercrits.com) and the series of books produced by Routledge.

88 Quoted in Rattenbury K and Hardingham S, *Supercrit 3, Richard Rogers, The Pompidou Centre*, Routledge 2012, p 124

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid

# Chapter 4 Creativity in Practice: Practicing Creativity

*Sally Stewart, Laura González,  
Robert Manth, Ross Birrell, Joanna  
Crotch*

## 4.1 Conditions and Sentiments: contexts for creativity

*Sally Stewart*

In introducing this chapter's contributions by academics drawn from across The Glasgow School of Art, it's important to reflect on the nature of the context from which they come, an independent School of Art, an increasing rarity within the UK if not across the world. Why is this important?

As a small specialist institution<sup>91</sup>, it does not attempt to replicate the “universe” of the university instead centring its activities on a core series of disciplines, those focused on creativity within a studio setting.

The work of the contributors here reflects the varied and diverse conditions and sentiments of the creative community from which they are drawn, rather than representing an single institutional, academic or intellectual position or perspective.

However they do provide indicators, pointers or traces of what how those conditions may influence our creativity or the sentiments which we might value over others in attempting to be part of a creative community<sup>92</sup>.

Certain recurring conditions appear and reappear in this selection. Three papers describe collaborations albeit with very different situations, one contingent on a single and significant if not catastrophic situation, event, one continuing but intermittent while the last is constant and sustained, reinforced by familial ties.

Each describes research and practice undertake at close proximity, at “zero distance”. These are not arms lengths investigations of others preoccupations or actions but grounded in personal knowledges and behaviours, and aimed at building on and extending these.

<sup>91</sup> A Small Specialist Institution as defined by the Scottish Funding Council

<sup>92</sup> Renowned alumnus C.R Mackintosh refers to the the impact of the conditions and sentiments under which work is developed in determining the final character of the work. From “Scottish Baronial Architecture”, a lecture given to the Glasgow Institute of Architects in 1891, reproduced in Charles Rennie Mackintosh the Architectural Papers, ed. Pamela Robertson, 1990 MIT Press.

All challenge the researcher to consider how new thinking can be produced, either through the progressive evolution of existing practices, through the comprehensive consideration and reframing of a continuing preoccupation, or the application of methods to new contexts.

Many require levels of negotiation, either between new or established collaborators, the physical context and means of production, the practitioner and the material. These negotiation make to activity itself live and dynamic, often challenging.

In *Reading as Creative Practice*, Dr Laura Gonzalez has chosen to situate creativity in an everyday activity, reading, provoking the reader to reconsider their engagement with text, their subsequent thinking and actions in the light of a creative intent. In so doing the reader becomes both audience and researcher themselves. The resulting output may be a subtle yet sustained shift in thinking, rather than any conventional creative artefact.

In *Locus* Robert Mantho considers a continuing yet intermittent collaboration with long term collaborator Michael Wenrich. The resulting work produces new thinking in the teaching studio yet is achieved in the outside world and at full size. The physical distance between the agents requires premeditation, planning and accord and a joint endeavour. The project work while delivered in a limited period of time provide the means for sustained consideration, completing one research cycle and providing the momentum for the next.

*A Beautiful Living Thing* allows two practitioners from very different disciplines, Jo Crotch and Dr Ross Birrell, to respond to circumstances in an almost opportunistic way. In this we see how opportunities can arise for the practitioner providing fertile ground for creative reactions to seemingly barren circumstances.

In *Creativity in Practice* two architects consider the basis of their shared practice, and the presence of the drawing as generator for he first shared response to a commission. Framed as a conversation the paper itself mirrors the nature of this almost instinctive reflexive approach to design.

So what can any of this tell us about creativity and the creative impulse? That creativity is responsive, opportunistic, reactive even. That is defies any simply, singular definition, instead it is as multifarious as the practitioners who attempt to undertake it. That opportunities for creativity can be sensed through carefully attuned antennae. That it can both be an individual or joint endeavour, but one that sits within the frame of a creative community. Those then are the conditions and sentiments we hope to engender in



## 4.2 Reading as Creative Practice

*Laura González*

*To Klaus Knoll, in theory and in practice.*

There is a field of practice called creative writing, but can reading be creative too? And if so, what would a practice involving reading be?<sup>93</sup> When in 2013 Sharon Kivland invited me to participate in a soirée at the Senate House Library in London for ‘Reading as Art—Turning the pages of Psychology’, I struggled to think through these questions. They were insistent, however. All my life, I have been a reader. I read before sleeping, I read when I wake up, with my breakfast. Every break, I read, and I even read for work. But reading is not my artistic work, and I wondered if it could be so. I have an unconscious (well, not so much) will for incorporating activities that take up much of my time into my artistic practice. Perhaps the question is not whether reading can be a creative prac-

93 Forbes Morlock asks the question ‘What is reading?’ in ‘The institute for creative reading’, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 12:2, 2007, pp. 5–6. Inspiration for the thoughts in this text was also gathered at the *Reading to Attention* panel at the 2010 Association of Art Historians conference, the *Friday Salon: Reading as a Contemporary Art* event at the ICA on the 5 July 2013, the *Reading as Art: Turning the Pages of Psychology* event at Senate House Library (15 October 2013), Sharon Kivland’s *Library Interventions* at Leeds College of Art Library from 3 February to 28 March 2014, and Kate Briggs’ project on Nabokov’s *Lectures on Literature*. For more information on these events see: Sharon Kivland and Forbes Morlock, *Reading to Attention* [conference panel], Association of Art Historians, 36<sup>th</sup> annual conference, 15–17 April 2010, available from <[http://www.aah.org.uk/media/docs/conference/1351\\_AAH\\_Handbook\\_text10\\_online\\_addenda.pdf](http://www.aah.org.uk/media/docs/conference/1351_AAH_Handbook_text10_online_addenda.pdf)> accessed 14.08.14, pp. 72–73; Institute of Contemporary Art, *Friday Salon: Friday Salon: Reading as a Contemporary Art*, London, 5 July 2013, available from <<http://www.ica.org.uk/whats-on/friday-salon-reading-contemporary-art>> accessed 14.08.14; Sharon Kivland and Mura Gosh, *Reading as Art: Turning the Pages of Psychology*, Senate House Library London, 15 October 2013, available from <[http://bloomsburyfestival.org.uk/ai1ec\\_event/reading-as-art-turning-the-pages-of-psychology/?instance\\_id=](http://bloomsburyfestival.org.uk/ai1ec_event/reading-as-art-turning-the-pages-of-psychology/?instance_id=)> accessed 14.08.14; Sharon Kivland, *Library Interventions*, Leeds College of Art Library, 3 February–28 March 2014, available from <<http://www.leeds-art.ac.uk/news-events/news/2014/04/10/sharon-kivland-reports-on-knowl-edge/>> accessed 14.08.14; Kate Briggs and Lucrezia Russo, eds. *The Nabokov Paper*, York: Information as Material, 2013.

tice but how it can become one. We are told to read for meaning, to demand of the text that it yields to us its knowledge. What would happen if we approached the reading we have to do creatively? What would it mean to read Derrida or Deleuze creatively and how would one go about it?

In this short text, I analyse the act of reading, review artists and writers that have developed reading as a creative practice and offer an overview of different aspects to consider in the practice of reading creatively: the anatomy of text, voice and object, spaces for reading and, finally, the position of the reader. The first two are open, inconclusive, and playful; the last element is where the crux of reading as creative practice is.

### The anatomy of text, voice and object

What do we read? We read, for example, articles, body language, cereal boxes, clues, contracts, dreams, emails, emotions, the future, images, letters, maps, minds, the news, novels, palms, skulls, statistics, subtitles, tarot cards, tealeaves, text messages, theoretical fiction, thoughts, to-do lists, tweets, paintings, plans, poetry, warning signs.

For ‘Reading as Art’, I proposed to Sharon that I would read one to one to the public attending the event, an intimate reading. My choice of texts was nineteenth century novels told by an unreliable narrator.<sup>94</sup> At the time of writing these works, Sigmund Freud was working on articulating how the unconscious spoke, so it felt fitting. My own contribution, my own reading of these works, would be unreliable too, as I fabricated, changed details, misread words, and filled gaps. A game of Chinese whispers between the author, the text, the reader, and the listener.

If my students read Derrida or Deleuze in this way for their degrees, it would not work (although I may give them marks for risk taking, especially if the unreliability was intentional, methodological), but creativity and unreliability are not the same thing.

<sup>94</sup> *Reading as Art—Turning the Pages of Psychology* was part of the Bloomsbury Festival and took place at the Senate House Library in London on the 15 October 2013. Mura Gosh, Research Librarian in Psychology at Senate House provided me with library copies of Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes—The Novels*, Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone*, Jane Austen’s *Emma*, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*, Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Blithedale Romance*, George Eliot’s *Adam Bede*, and Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* for me to read. Laura González, *The Unreliable Reader*, available from <<http://www.lauragonzalez.co.uk/the-unreliable-reader/>> accessed 14.08.14.

Creative practices and creative acts show conflict and unreliability is just one of the ways in which this can be explored, bad ventriloquism. There are many more variables to play with in the anatomy of the object (see, for example, Olafur Eliasson’s *Your House*, or Georgia Russell’s book sculptures), the text (as shown in the works of Alejandro Cesarco), and the voice (see Mathieu Copeland’s *A Spoken Word Exhibition* at the Baltic in 2009, or Stewart Home’s work *Reading from a Headstand*).<sup>95</sup>

In the *Hysterical Literature* videos, a woman reads her favourite book while being pleased under the table, off camera.<sup>96</sup> This—a common way of treating hysteria in the nineteenth century—affects her voice, the way the text is delivered to us, viewers. There is a separation between mind and body, but my initial reading might be perhaps assuming that there is no pleasure, no *jouissance*,<sup>97</sup> in her reading of the book, only in what is happening below. Yet, as she reads with her body, as well as with her mind and voice, the text changes, producing a different kind of reading by both her, and us as viewers. A volcano spewing ashes too dangerous for planes to fly disrupted the ‘Reading to Attention’ session at the Association of Art Historians annual conference in 2009. The chairs, Sharon Kivland and Forbes Morlock had the papers emailed to them and recruited readers for a rather difficult task. Were they to read the text, simply and to the letter (is that even possible?) as the *Hysterical Literature* readers tried to do, or were they also reading, channeling, ventriloquizing the author, as I had done with the nineteenth century novelists?

The author Vladimir Nabokov warns us that there is no possible

<sup>95</sup> There is a curious experience when hearing one’s voice in the course of reading aloud, an experience of seeing oneself outside, of an *it* in the I, of Lacanian *extimacy*, intimacy outside. For more on voice, read Mladen Dolar, ‘The Object Voice’, in *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, ed. by Renata Salecl and Slavoj Žižek, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996, 7–31, and Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Hysterical Literature’ is a video art series by NYC-based photographer and filmmaker Clayton Cubitt. It explores feminism, mind/body dualism, distraction portraiture, and the contrast between culture and sexuality.’ Clayton Cubitt, *Hysterical Literature*, available from <<http://hystericalliterature.com/>> accessed 14.08.14.

<sup>97</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, on Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972–1973 (Le séminaire, livre XX: encore [1975])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Bruce Fink, New York: W. W. Norton, 1998.

reading, only re-reading.<sup>98</sup> Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, plays emphasis on misreading and takes as its text, those things that others discard: dreams, slips of the tongue, forgetting, unintended acts, symptoms ... This is akin to reading the gutter in comic books, that place where meaning falls. So how is one to read? If psychoanalysis can be understood as a practice of reading, then its methodology for doing so might be applied more generally. While the patient writes—well, she really reads too, but lets assume some writing—through free association, saying everything that comes into her head, the analyst listens by evenly-hovering-attention. This mode of reading places equal emphasis on the text, the voice and the object, where ‘my mother has died’ does not have more importance than ‘I have changed the curtains in my living room’. This is reading without memory or desire.

### Spaces for reading

Where are you reading this? In the library, your office, your bed, a sofa, a doctor’s waiting room, a supermarket queue, a break at work, a computer, a book, a printout? What is this space doing to your reading?<sup>99</sup>

### The position of the reader

In making choices around reading, the reader has rights, as Daniel Pennac shows us,<sup>100</sup> but she also has responsibilities, and among these, the most important one is the responsibility to choose a position to read, in mind and body. This will guide her attention. Freud’s preference was to almost be prone. He had a custom-made chair, which is displayed in his house in Vienna, a chair not for sitting, but for reading. Another psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan,

tells us, in his discussion of Hans Holbein’s painting *The Ambassadors*,<sup>101</sup> that, in anamorphosis, the reader needs to take a position, to choose where to stand in relation to the work and what to read, the diplomats, or the *memento mori* skull. Seeing both at the same time is not possible. He also warns us that the image we see is an illusion, imaginary.<sup>102</sup> But both of these provocations come from optics and perhaps I am assuming that reading involves seeing too much. Perhaps it does *not only*.

Lacan liked reading more than writing. He only really published one book, *Écrits*.<sup>103</sup> He chose to open his *opus magnus* with a chapter on Edgar Allan Poe’s detective story ‘The Purloined Letter’.<sup>104</sup> This text represents his manifesto for reading. Poe’s story is symmetrical, with two scenes containing scenes-within-scenes. The first scene happens in Dupin’s apartment. The famous armchair detective is visited by the Prefect of police, who tells the scene-within-the-scene. This happens in the Royal boudoir. The Queen receives a compromising letter, which she hides from the King who is in the room. Minister D. enters and understands the situation, deciding to take advantage by availing himself of the letter while the Queen is powerless. The police, the Prefect says, have tried everything to find the letter but have been unsuccessful and, hence, he engages the services of Dupin. The second scene also

98 Vladimir Nabokov, ‘Good Readers and Good Writers’, in *Lectures on Literature*, ed. by Fredson Bowers, Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1980, pp. 1–6. For an interesting creative re-reading, see the multidisciplinary project *Searching for Sebald* and the documentary *Patience (After Sebald)*. Vance Bell and Lise Patt, *Searching for Sebald*, Los Angeles: Institute of Cultural Inquiry, 2006; *Patience (After Sebald)* [DVD], directed by Grant Gee, UK: Soda Pictures, 2012.

99 The architect Jane Rendell wrote a book on the architecture of art criticism, exploring sites of writing. Could there be a parallel between sites of writing and sites of reading? Jane Rendell, *Site-Writing, the Architecture of Art Criticism*, London: IB Tauris, 2010.

100 Daniel Pennac, *The Rights of the Reader*, tr. by Sarah Adams, London: Walker Books, 2006.

101 Jacques Lacan, ‘Of the Gaze and objet petit a’, in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse [1973])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Alan Sheridan, New York: W.W. Norton, 1981, pp. 65–119.

102 Lacan’s fascination with the visual starts from his first seminar, in which he discussed an optical experiment called the *Experiment of the Inverted Bouquet*. A concave mirror, a plain mirror, a box, a vase, a bouquet of flowers and a viewer are arranged in relation to each other so that the bouquet and the vase are made to appear together. This ‘togetherness’, this recognition, is totally dependent on how and where the viewer is positioned in relation to the objects. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud’s Papers on Technique, 1953–1954 (Le séminaire I: Les écrits techniques de Freud [1975])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by John Forrester, New York: W.W. Norton, 1991, p. 78.

103 Jacques Lacan, *Écrits. The First Complete Edition in English (Écrits [1966])*, tr. by Bruce Fink, New York, and London: W.W. Norton, 2006.

104 Jacques Lacan, ‘The Purloined Letter’, in *Seminar II: The Ego in Freud’s Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955 (Le séminaire, livre II: Le moi dans la théorie de Freud et dans la technique de la psychanalyse 1954–1955 [1978])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Sylvana Tomaselli, London: W. W. Norton, 1991, pp. 191–205; Jacques Lacan, ‘Seminar on the Purloined Letter’, in *Écrits*, pp. 6–48; Edgar Allan Poe, ‘The Purloined Letter’, in *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, London: CRW Publishing, 2003 [1839–1850], pp. 220–244.

happens in Dupin's quarters and is narrated by Dupin who recounts his successful retrieval of the letter. The scene-within-the-scene, this time, takes place at the Minister D.'s apartment and shows how Dupin finds and replaces the letter. It has hidden in plain view, on the mantelpiece.

In his analysis, Lacan examines the effect the letter has on the characters as it changes hands. Its routes and displacements determine the actions and destinies of the characters. He divides the circuit of the letter into the two narrative scenes, each with three positions (mirroring the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic) as follows: Scene 1: the blind (King), the complacent seer (Queen) and the robber (Minister); Scene 2: The blind (Queen); the complacent seer (Minister), the robber (Dupin). The pattern of these two scenes leads him to create a third scene, the one taking place at the time of reading where the blind is the Minister, the complacent seer is represented by Dupin and Lacan himself (the reader) takes the position of the robber. To read well, one has to rob, to be able to see that the blind and the complacent seer leave open what should be hidden. The reader needs to take advantage of it. For Lacan, to read is not to enter the Real (which is blind) or to give in to one's own subjective Imaginary readings (which are complacent), but to understand the Symbolic circuit of the letter, to be aware of the rules of the game, of the structure of play.

And structure and play are also present in another of Lacan's theories that are applicable to reading: the four discourses.<sup>105</sup> In them, language and algebra enter into a flirtatious relation to explain the social bond, what it means to speak. The discourses look at the impossible relation between an agent and an other in the Master, the University, the Analyst and the Hysteric. In these relations, something is produced. The slave produces desire; the university split, alienated, subjects; the analyst symptoms; and it is only the hysteric that produces knowledge.

So, perhaps, the key to reading creatively is in the hysteric, not in its depiction in *Hysterical Literature*, but in the true hysteric. The true hysteric is one that lets herself be analysed by the text, asking

it *what do you want from me?*<sup>106</sup>

<sup>105</sup> The Four Discourses are outlined and discussed in Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse, 1969–1970 [1991])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Russell Grigg, New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.

<sup>106</sup> For an account of hysteria in relation to knowledge, read Eleanor Bowen and Laura González, 'Between laughter and crying', in *Madness, Women and the Power of Art*, ed. by Frances Davies and Laura González, Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2013, pp. 197–234. A couple of examples of true hysterical readings are Sharon Kivland's *A Case of Hysteria* and her *Freud on Holiday* series, Sophie Calle's *The Address Book*, Simon Morris's *Interpretation* and his *Royal Road to the Unconscious*, Samuel Beckett's *Not I*, read and played by Billie Whitelaw in 1973; Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*; Hester Reeve's performance work *The Critical Girlfriend*; and Kurt Schwitters' dada work *Ursonate*. Sharon Kivland, *A Case of Hysteria*, London: Book Works, 1999; Sharon Kivland, *Freud on Holiday*, available from <<http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/c3ri/projects/freud-on-holiday>> accessed 15.08.14; Sophie Calle, *The Address Book*, Los Angeles: Siglio, 2012; Simon Morris, *Interpretation vol. i*, York: Information as Material, 2002; Simon Morris, *Interpretation vol. ii*, York: Information as Material, 2002; Simon Morris, Howard Britton, Sigmund Freud, *The Royal Road to the Unconscious*, York: Information as Material, 2003; Samuel Beckett and Billie Whitelaw, *Not I*, available from <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4LDwfKxr-M>> accessed 15.08.14; Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, tr. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002; Hester Reeve, 'The 'B' in Philosophy' [Conference Paper], *What is Performance Philosophy?*, University of Surrey, 11–13 April 2013, available from <[http://shura.shu.ac.uk/7106/3/The\\_B\\_in\\_Philosophy\\_final.pdf](http://shura.shu.ac.uk/7106/3/The_B_in_Philosophy_final.pdf)> accessed 15.08.14; Kurt Schwitters and Lynn Book, *Ursonate*, performed on 5 November 2012, Charlotte and Philip Hanes Art Gallery, Wake Forest University, available from <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4NEky0e2C0>> accessed 15.08.14.



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## 4.3 Creative Practice

### *Robert Mantho*

The paper outlines the work of the collective Locus, which was formed to explore architecture through the direct construction of spatial experiments in selected contexts. Locus's research resides in the context of spatial investigation that architects and artists have engaged in since the early 20th century, a culture of speculation, which explores the basic conceptions of architecture and space. This speculation occurs in a broader dialogue, where scientific thought, popular media and technological change, constantly raise new ideas regarding the relationship between mental and physical realities. The work accepts that spectators may not experience space conscious of the various spatial ideas discussed in the disciplines of art, architecture and science, however these ideas are part of the cultural context in which space is experienced. This research extends this speculation with a methodology that is perceptual, haptic and visceral. Outlined below is the work produced by Locus and a brief discussion of the relationship between this creative practice and the professional and academic activities of the collaborative participants.

#### **Locus**

Locus is a collaborative effort formed by Michael Wenrich and Robert Mantho to pursue the making of architecture as an act of art in a specific place, reflecting and responding to the defining physical and cultural characteristics of a given site. The work is speculative, with the goals and intentions of each project discovered as ideas are explored in various mediums. This is a creative practice developed over a series of projects and through which a series of architectural questions have been identified and explored. In the work, participants are encouraged to engage the projects to reveal primary architectural relationships, encouraging people to question and possibly reinvent their understanding of space and form. Each project has been used to investigate and promote responsible relationships to resources and the environment. Over 10 years 6 projects have been completed and a working process that explores how design decisions are made, the dialogue between construction and design solutions and the spatial consequences of ambiguity and indeterminacy. This practice compliments and expands our

professional practice and academic pursuits, through a dynamic exchange of issues, knowledge and enthusiasm between our varied modes of architectural endeavor. Michael Wenrich is an architect in private practice, producing buildings for a range of private clients. Robert Mantho is a full time academic at the Mackintosh School of Architecture, teaching design and researching various architectural issues. The work of Locus allows a direct conversation between speculation and practice; professional practice is informed by the spatial insights developed by Locus, while academic teaching is extended through the investigation of conceptual ideas in physical experiments. The opportunity to explore space, colour, material and fabrication techniques in such an experimental context, directly inform the solutions developed by Michael Wenrich for his clients. This can be seen in the challenging spatial compositions and the use of colour in his practice. For Robert Mantho, Locus offers the opportunity to study spatial proposals and making techniques that originate in the studio in tangible form. The work and discussions surrounding it are also fed back into the studio, informing teaching practice and expanding references for students.

#### **Hurricane Ridge**

Hurricane Ridge was a construction located on a steep wooded site, which began as an investigation into how body position interacted with spatial perception. Each primary position; sitting, standing and lying down, has a specific location and a unique relationship with the topography and the space in which it is contained. A 28-foot beam serves as the structural and conceptual spine of the project. This beam supports the programmatic elements while providing a path for moving between them. The project opens to the user via an 8' x 8' platform that is articulated by four walls, 2 fixed and 2 movable.

As the construction is occupied, the user interacts with and manipulates the architecture to construct an enclosure. The participant enters the platform by unfolding a hinged wall and then raises a sliding wall to complete a 5'-4" high enclosure. The landscape filters through the translucent skin and this personal enclosure provides a place for reflection, daydream, and imagination.

Through a passage between two walls, the user moves along the spine to a ladder leading down to an 8' x 4' x 4' suspended box. Upon entering the box, the ladder is removed and a translucent frame is placed on the entry opening completing the envelope. Lying down, suspended in the air, one feels embraced and contained while light,

air, and view permeate the thin-screened surfaces and the covered opening overhead frames a view to the vast dome of the sky.

Just beyond the box, a copper plate marks the end of the beam. At this moment, the user is at the highest point above the sloping ground and their eyes are directed to the distant mountain views.

### **Making Space**

'Making Space' was an installation in a given space that explored how the ambiguous spatial conditions created by color fields and gossamer planes influence how participants 'read' space. Within a single room, roughly 26' square, a grid of strings with a 6" spacing, were suspended from the ceiling to form a series of planes delineating a series of spaces.

The individual strings were weighted with translucent spheres, which hovered above the ground plane, collectively forming planes at specific heights. Through the use of color and minimal material edges the user was engaged in a spatial experience that was physical, visual and intellectual.

The open volume of the gallery was simultaneously divided and unified by ten distinct but interconnected spaces of color with edges defined by the planes of various lengths and densities of suspended string. These planes of string alternately compressed space, while at other times expanded out to the exterior or slipped into an adjacent volume.

The floor, walls and ceiling of each zone defined by the planes of string, were painted with highly saturated colors, further defining and blurring the edges between the vertical and horizontal surfaces. The colors were chosen to compose a series of visual elements that moved either to the front or back of the viewer's perceptual field. The planes of string had a strong visual presence but light physical quality so they would disappear as one concentrated on spaces beyond. The colored surfaces also had a strong spatial presence but flattened out when the viewer focused on the planes of string or changed their depth of field.

The interaction between the color on the gallery surfaces and the transparency of suspended strings created a series of highly articulated spaces that would collapse and compress when the viewer changed positions. These spaces vibrated between definition and ambiguity, as the participant moved through the project. The spaces hovered between a strong physical definition and an immaterial, almost flattened sense of space. The project created a spatial experience of polarities, from connecting to separating,

compressing to expanding, and cohering to collapsing.

### **Constructing Complex Space**

"Constructing Complex Space" was a fourteen-day workshop project that took place at the Mackintosh School of Architecture from June 19th to July 1st, 2006. Ten students, from disciplines across the school, participated in the workshop.

The two-week project consisted of three phases

1. site exploration and analysis,
2. investigative collaborative design.
3. construction of the collective design proposal.

The project was conceived as an architectural promenade comprised of a plane of fabric that wrapped and folded around the existing structure and a constructed wall and platform. The fabric plane marked, defined, contained, and extended space as it interacted with the existing building and introduced structures. The spaces created varied from open to closed, with a range of spatial definition, from clearly defined to very ambiguous. Aspects of spatial definition were also affected by temporal and situational conditions as the quality of light or the number of participants significantly influenced the user's experience of the constructed spaces. The project required participation, while the project did have visual impact, its core characteristics could only be encountered through physical action.

The site's internal complexity and its relationships to the city were also explored. The fabric became a marker, an enclosure and a ground surface, negotiating the surface of the existing building, the constructed wall, the elevated platform and the street below. It served as a thread stitching the typically isolated site back into the context of the city.

The project was an experiment in expanding our collaborative practice and our exploration of spatial condition and experience. The collaborators sought to construct a physical experience that engaged people in a process of revelation and perception about the specific site, about spatial definition, and about the city.

### **Taking Place**

'Taking Place' was a continuation of the exploration begun in the previous installation 'Making Space'. Again the given conditions initiated a discussion about spatial definition and its malleability. Within a tight horizontal slab of space occupied by six moveable millwork walls designed to host exhibition information we sought to exploit their thickness and illuminated quality to make edges

and boundaries that had depth and variability. Early on, we decided to use these six walls to define one edge of six distinct but related spaces within the larger volume of the gallery.

Each wall was positioned with a careful consideration of its relationship to the boundary conditions of the larger space and of its relationship to the other five walls to emphasize the space in between and around them. We used color, light, and surface to construct a series of spatial relationships which oscillate between defined, individual units and an interrelated, layered whole.

The design started with the three primary colors and paired them with their compliments, because the high contrast relationship and the vibrating edge that occurs when complimentary colors meet facilitated discreet readings of each color field while also pushing and pulling spatial perception. We began exploring the impact of giving one color more dominance over the other and studying the impact of these colors on horizontal and vertical surfaces. We constructed three pairs of spaces, each pair using the same two colors but inverting their surface relationship creating spatial and perceptual bounce between fixed color 'boxes' making up the whole.

In complimentary pairings, one color is warm or active and the other is cool or passive. These spaces are neither clearly warm or cool or active or passive. They are deliberately ambiguous and their perceived 'temperature' varies depending on ones relationship to the space they are occupying and their visual connection to adjacent ones.

In addition to color we introduced sheer fabric to define the edge opposite the thick, existing walls and to add depth and surface to the walls themselves. While the fabric encloses space and clearly defines an 'inside' and 'outside' to each of the six spaces, it also connects each space to the adjacent ones through translucency. Its lightness and thinness stands in sharp contrast to the solid and opaque wall on the opposite edge. The whiteness of the fabric reflects the color immediately adjacent to it and its translucency allows colors from the other spaces to pass through.

Each experience of the project was the consequence of the unique set of relationships created by the variability of light conditions, levels of occupation and the moving fabric, combined with the configuration of the spatial volumes, colored planes and translucent layers. This underlined the ephemeral nature of the installation and all spatial experience, while also emphasizing the significance of the active participant.

## Lessons Learned

These projects have exploited the opportunities created by temporary speculative constructions to explore a series of architectural questions. Questions such as: How are edges defined? How do edges interact to contain space? What is the relationship between the contained and the expanse, or between two interconnected spaces? What role does visual perception play in answering these questions? Do the mechanics of the human body impact on these questions and does the haptic memory of the body influence how these questions are answered? This form of creative practice distinguishes itself from commercial architectural practice or the design build studio, by being temporary and devoid of program. Locus's work is engaged in the speculative context or art and architectural research, extending research by specifically pursuing in physical experiences, the ideas discussed by artists and architects in visual mediums. This value of this creative practice is its use of theoretical speculation, design and construction. Since 2002, Locus has been researching complex space. In a series projects fundamental architectural questions have been explored. Investigating these research questions through the design and construction of a physical space in a collaborative format is a unique research methodology. The exchange of concepts, techniques and methods between two practitioners, expands the scope of the research and its impacts and the tight schedule exploits the energy and inspiration of intense and focused work. In the current culture most knowledge is disseminated through visual media, this ocular centrism not only limits development, it also undermines both understanding and bodily experience. Restricting aesthetic value to the seen reduces that which is considered and minimizes the ability to process non-visual stimulus. Participants and a wider audience experience these projects as physical constructs, not just as images. This research insists that the physical apprehension of complex space is central to understanding and developing the core issues of architecture and environmental art and that creative, interactive collaboration is a unique vehicle for examining these key questions for architects. The value of Locus for the practitioners involved is in the exchange of both practical and theoretical knowledge from two distinct, but related practices. Locus is also an opportunity to explore the individual and collaborative creativity of the participants. Originally Locus was formed as an outlet for thoughts, activities and speculation not contained within the practice of an architecture office. As it developed the collaboration became a way of developing and exploring creativity, as well as the strategies and techniques



for implementing creativity across both the collaboration and the range of personal practices of both contributors.

## 4.4 A Beautiful Living Thing

*Ross Birrell, Joanna Crotch*

*'Let every artist strive to make his flower a beautiful living thing, something that will convince the world that there may be, there are, things more precious more beautiful – more lasting than life itself.'*

C R Mackintosh 'Seemliness' (Glasgow, 1902)

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014 a fire spread through The Glasgow School of Art, Charles Rennie Mackintosh's masterpiece, badly damaging the heart of the School. The west wing of the building was particularly badly affected including several of the Studios, Professor's Offices, the Hen Run and sadly the Library, considered to be the 'Jewel' of Mackintosh's work, which incurred significant damage.

### The Project

In the immediate aftermath of the fire the response from the GSA's students, staff and alumni was overwhelming. The sense of loss and sadness impacted on this community not just locally but also at an international level. This emotional reaction has, over the course of time, developed into a desire to engage with the Mackintosh Building, and a growing number of research projects focused on the building are now underway, involving students and staff.

Following this tragic event, Birrell and Crotch were both driven by a deep desire to record the irrevocable damage, and the concept of 'A Beautiful Living Thing' developed. Both authors independently felt a connection with the building in the context of their own research and through this common ground they agreed to work collaborate on the project. The ambition was to capture and record the beauty within the building viewing the restoration of this damaged work of art from the immediate aftermath of the fire, and through the process of restoration to completion. Through discussion the project developed and it was agreed that a series of three films would be produced; designed as a series of visual 'movements' each would be aligned to mark significant stages of rehabilitation of the building; before, during and after the restoration work.

*Film 1* places a single musician within the damaged library, and records a new composition transposed from the words of Mackintosh 'A Beautiful Living Thing'.

*Film 2* will concern itself with 'improvisation' in response to the improvisatory nature of fire and will take place during the reconstruction phase.

*Film 3* will celebrate completion and a new beginning through a choral piece. It is hoped to invite GSA's own choir to participate in this event. Overall this is a linear project that has been conceived as a whole but with each part having independent legitimacy.

### The Project Team

This collaborative project involves staff from within GSA and also has the ambition to extend its collaboration to artists from other creative institutions in the city. Director Ross Birrell, an artist and lecturer at Glasgow School of Art (GSA), and producer Joanna Crotch, an architect and teacher at the Mackintosh School of Architecture also at the GSA, are the principles authors. Prior to the fire they had not previously worked together but have formed a connection through their own practices that brings their thinking together in the context of the Mackintosh Building, collaborating in the making of the filmic artefacts. They are supported by a core team of technicians from GSA who bring their own experience in film making to the project. It is also the authors' aim that the project provides a platform for collaboration with other Glasgow-based practitioners including the RSNO, Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra, Royal Conservatoire and GSA Choir.

Birrell's previous work demonstrates a long-standing portfolio, which combines film, music and installations. He has become particularly fascinated with the relationship of music and place. His work includes site-specific compositions for the bomb-damaged Spiegelsaal, Claerchens Ballhaus, Berlin, the Non-Catholic Cemetery Rome and the Burgkirche St. Romanus, Raron. This research has been widely exhibited internationally.

Crotch's research explores embodied experience and memory, and this has resulted in a phenomenological approach to learning and teaching in the design of space and place. Her teaching practice involves the creation of experiences that in turn become memories for the participants. Working with a multi-disciplinary postgraduate group; these acoustical experiments use sound and music within specific site locations. The Mackintosh building pre-fire has been one of the loci used for these events. These hands on workshops

begin a discovery of one's understanding of environments through first-hand experience. She has previously worked with RSNO violinist Chandler, exploring spatial experience via music and sounds.

### The Research

The primary objective of the research is to produce a sequence of films which respond through composed and improvised music and movement to the fire-damaged spaces of the Mackintosh building and their subsequent reconstruction in such a way which recognise that the fire-damage has produced new compositional forms. For Deleuze 'art is composition' and this premise both underpins and is challenged as the captured 'movements' address 'composition' and 'improvisation' in music and movement in response to both architecture (composition) and fire (improvisation).

The primary research questions are 'How might the fire-damaged Mackintosh building be viewed as a composition?' and 'How might music / movement register the emotional impact of the event of the fire and follow the paths of its reclamation and reconstruction?' In light of these questions a methodology has been structured around composition and improvisation, which will respond to the contexts of composition (Mackintosh building) and improvisation (fire) to produce new compositions and films. Echoing the painstaking reclamation process, the camera will be used to record details of the interiors in 'forensic' close up, using slow movement, panning, steadicam and tracking shots, to collect these temporary compositions within the building. The focus is upon music and this further evolves Birrell's previous research into how musician responds to architectural spaces. This preoccupation continues through his compositions, which transpose context relevant text into scores that form the 'soundtracks' of his site-specific films. Crotch's experiential workshops with sound, including Mackintosh library pre-fire, continue their concerns with site specificity and sound.

### Part One

The first 'movement' or film has now been completed. It explores the damage and debris resulting from the fire and features a composition by Birrell, transposed and inspired by the words of Mackintosh 'A Beautiful Living Thing'. Bill Chandler of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra performed the musical score inside the ruined library between late December 2014 and early January 2015. Captured on film, along with contextual shots to locate and record the status of the building then and there. At that time debris, now

painstakingly removed by the archivists was still in location and provided a rich visual landscape, its multi-faceted surface also creating a unique temporary acoustical condition within the library.

The resulting short film captures the atmosphere and spirit within the space through the performed music and captured visuals. It records the devastating impact of the fire on the Library's unique interior and its precious contents. Beginning in silence in the first floor corridor in the west wing, the film takes the viewer slowly into the library, revealing an unworldly landscape of burnt fittings and fixture as well as badly charred books and furniture. Here the lament begins with an overriding feeling of nostalgia, and a beauty and peace to the devastation is exposed, which creates an eerie and emotive atmosphere. The full physical volume of the library and the now exposed furniture store above is revealed as the camera pans back, exposing the catastrophic damage that has resulted from the fire. A single bearded sculpture of a musician with a violin in hand, stands guard aside the glassless towering windows, charred but resolute. The viewer is finally taken up to the loggia, and at this point the lament builds to a more hopeful tone, where views of the city are revealed in the last light of the day. Throughout the movement the composition works with the canvas of city noise, resulting in a textural soundscape unique to that place at that time.

### Part Two

The second movement is currently in the planning stage and it is envisaged that this will be complete by autumn 2015. It will mark the completion of the decontamination process, which is currently underway, and also the commencement of the restoration contract. This second 'movement' intends to explore more closely the relationship of the passage of the fire through the building. Unlike the first film, where the composition was created prior to the filming, this second phase will work with improvisation and this will represent a metaphor for the fire. A flow of movement and music will explore the studio and circulation spaces, using the mode of improvisation to weave paths and eddies within the spaces in an abstracted reflection of the nature of fire. Performances will be by the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra, led by Professor Raymond MacDonald, Head of Reid School of Music, and Edinburgh University. It is also intended to develop the theme of movement and improvisation with a Glasgow based dance improvisation group, and negotiations with them are currently in progress.

### Part Three

The concluding film will celebrate the completion of the restoration process. It is hoped that this will be developed in collaboration with The Glasgow School of Art's Choir, and is likely to be a celebratory coral composition. The date and precise venue for this final piece have yet to be determined.

This on-going project has been fully supported and funded by the Glasgow School of Art's research office and is part of a major programme of academic research aligned to the restoration of the Mackintosh Building. The first film has been well received having been screened at a number of events with GSA. Its first public screening was in April 2015, when it was screened as part of the programme for 'Building on the Mac' public symposium. The RIBA in London featured it within a special event to mark the end of its very successful 'Mackintosh Architecture' exhibition that showcased original drawings by Mackintosh, at the end of May 2015. Other screenings have also been planned.

A Beautiful Living Thing is dedicated to the Scottish Fire & Rescue Services and the Staff and Students of The Glasgow School of Art.

## 4.5 Creativity in Practice

*Discussion with Prof. Robin Webster OBE, Sept 2014*

### *Miranda Cameron*

The practice, cameronwebster architects, has significant experience and expertise, which works well together, perhaps owing to the close relations between the partners.

Stuart Cameron and Miranda Webster (Robin's daughter and son in law) established the practice with Robin, following his retirement as Head of the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture in 2005, forming a collaboration between two generations of designers.

Sometimes the best ideas or solutions spring from informal conversations and drawings on the back of an envelope. By framing a conversation with Robin, we hoped to record the experiences and preoccupations of his extensive career in both practice and education, during which his passion for creativity has never ceased.

As with any conversations with Robin, the discussion inevitably focuses around a drawing, sketch, diagram or cartoon, and carried on from there establishing a recognisable pattern of co-creation.

Miranda Cameron in discussion with Prof Robin Webster OBE, colleague and partner in Cameron Webster.

#### **Background**

Father and daughter, having both taught and practiced independently including in both in London and Glasgow, Miranda and Robin now practice together having set up Cameron Webster architects in 2005. The practice has become recognized for architecture that is thoughtful and contextually responsive.

This discussion attempts to explore some of the preoccupations and considerations at work in the act of practice.

Robin has had a long and sustained career in architectural practice and education, winning a number of competitions, including the new parliamentary building at Westminster (sadly not built) and the west shore of Manhattan (not built either).

He was a founding partner of Spence + Webster Architects in London, from 1972-1984, and cameronwebster architects in Glasgow from 2005 to the present. His most notable projects are

probably the houses he designed in London and Scotland.

He has taught at the University of Cambridge, Washington University St Louis, The Mackintosh School of Architecture Glasgow, and The Scott Sutherland School of Architecture at RGU in Aberdeen, where he was Head of School from 1984-2005.

*Miranda Cameron*

What gets your juices going as a practitioner?

*Cameron Webster*

*It's true that your juices have got to be going somehow, something has to be exciting. Just the act of starting drawing, through which ideas can come off the paper by examining the geometry of a site, structure or the comparison of an historical example or in fact the realization of a similar problem can excite you. The act of drawing allows references to be made as you think.*

Is there ever a new idea?

*We always think we're doing something new but we never are. Without deliberately pastiching something, one is always standing on the shoulders of others, and of course that can be stimulating in itself.*

As architects, how do we try or test new ideas?

*One of the ways is being in competition with other architects, in the office or in the public arena. The good thing about competitions is that you actually see what others have done, which raises the stakes and challenges you to find the "eureka" moment or significant move that somehow resolves a problem elegantly or side stepped a problem in a way to realize something better than maybe might have been expected by the brief.*

Is there a particular example of this?

*The Parliament building winning competition entry in 1973. When we in Spence + Webster created an unprecedented public space where people could watch debates and meet MPs. It was a move that created more than was asked for and was a radical move.*



What was it that started the process of thinking, was it fuelled by political thinking or social exchanges + engagement?

*No, it was a structural idea to begin with and then we realized the solution could create a public space. We started out with pencil and paper looking at the site and the London underground which runs diagonally across the site, and did some elementary arithmetic sums about the space required and the number of floors that could be fitted in within the planning ceiling, and discovering that there was a bit of spare space. This led to looking at ways you could span across and hang the building from 4 columns, which contained all the services and allowed a very big public space and then this generated a whole lot of other political / social ideas*

Are there other examples of pushing an idea beyond the brief requirements?

*Another was the west bank of Manhattan on the Hudson River, which was a winning competition entry. We started the process by examining the original maps of the site and we saw how beautiful the natural environment had been before Manhattan was built. We wanted to restore the landscape to its natural state and proposed tucking office accommodation underneath an undulating landscaped roof to create a hilly cliff along the east bank of the Hudson. Doing a bit of research at the beginning can stimulate ideas.*

Is it limited to architectural competitions?

*Certainly not, every project in the office starts with research of some description, either historical data of the site and as you draw, technological transfer can help with ideas. If you've got a problem and you look at another discipline, maybe industrial or automotive and you see how they might solve it in a different way or use different materials. Jan Kaplisky + Future Systems do this a lot, as do others: it's not a new idea.*

Would you agree that this sort of approach is appropriate to every project?

*Yes, but formal architectural competitions allow a certain amount of speculation and frees you in a way from the dialogue with the client, which of course can also be a terribly bad thing, and the danger of a competition is that it removes you from the client. Sometimes, however the client may have fixed preconceptions, and their absence can be a good thing. You can then offer them ideas they hadn't considered before.*

How are ideas developed within the office?

*Within the office, between ourselves, we produce options and wee sketches and sometimes these explore sensible, rational ideas and sometimes also and at the same time a silly idea. Quite often, the silly idea grows legs and is what we move forward with.*

Do site and budget constraints limit creativity?

*Tighter sites and challenging briefs are sometimes more interesting and give more interesting solutions. I remember going to the Barbican and thinking they had too much money to know what to do with and spent it on gold plated finishes in the theatre etc.. When you've got a tight site or onerous planning restrictions, the brutal conversations can be of benefit or an opportunity which requires some hard thinking.*

*Budget constraints are very common. Housing Associations, for example have a very fixed and controlled spec for materials and space requirements. This allows little room for manoeuvre and you have to be able to reconsider something to be creative, and this sometimes doesn't seem to be possible.*

*As architects we are often thinking about sites, looking at backwaters and wondering about the potential of what might work.*

*Whilst carrying out a job for a client on Bank St, Glasgow, we noticed a derelict brick building at the end of a squalid lane. Because we were able to see the hidden potential in the use of the basement, it gave us the opportunity to do something and springboard other ideas into the proposal.*

Do clients contribute to creativity?

*Yes, and when they are willing to think out of the box and be supportive of us it helps immensely.*

*The clients for the house in Craignish (on the west coast of Scotland) were very hard to please to begin with, but supportive when their ambitions were realized. When clients realize you've worked hard to solve their problems they are generally appreciative and recognize the effort, which is very encouraging. Being able to find enough funds can be important too.*

Are other collaborations helpful to the creative process?

*We have been very fortunate to collaborate with NM Interiors in forming our development company and developing our own studios together. Working alongside another creative industry keeps us inspired. We have also teamed up with artists Toby Patterson & Ettie Spencer for bids and competitions which allows for a wider debate through a different medium.*

*Builders themselves offer a collaborative discussion in solving a particular problem on site and offering options of how best to resolve a detail with a better outcome, even although this can be late in the day.*

Does teaching have an input into practice creativity?

*Do think that meeting other architects and critics in a review, you can generate speculations which extrapolate from a students idea. Educationally one might have*

*reservations about whether this overwhelms a student but for people who are tuned into it and don't take it as a personal criticism, it can be very invigorating and of benefit to everyone there.*

We talked about research carried out at the start of each project or competition: does the practice carry out research that has wider implications?

*As practitioners we are interested in a wide variety of issues and with each project we are carrying out some form of research – i.e. a new external cladding system or a different approach to the reconfiguration of a house type, or an unexpected material driven by a budget constraint.*

*Wider experimentation should be given time and through collaboration with other specialists researchers, important problems like the state of volume house building can be analysed. There have been a huge amount of configurational studies, land use, built form analysis undertaken and a lot of these ideas are well understood now but still the volume house builders have not cottoned onto them.*

*In an office the obvious opportunities for creativity can be very limited. A lot of the time there is some drudgery, and it is important to try to rise above that and have a general atmosphere that encourages debate and free ideas in meetings and events that involve everyone. Recognising that there are opportunities at every stage in a project and at every scale is important.*

# Chapter 5

## Politics for, in and through creative practice

*Veronika Valk, Michael Corr,  
Karli Luik*

## 5.1 Introduction to Politics for, in and through creative practice

*Veronika Valk*

Politics, the art and process of governing, cannot do without creativity. *Vice versa*, creative practice itself depends on the specific politics in each country, region or municipality.

Looking at the academic realm, creative practice research is in a constant dialogue with its contextual academic regulatory framework. This chapter thus aims to offer insights into a set of political conflicts and contradictions, in other words challenges and opportunities, that surface through creative practice (research) in operation. Why is it important? Because such dynamics affect the impact of creative practice (research) at its core, affect its contribution to society.

The first article focuses on how creative practice research conducted at the Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA) faces certain specific challenges to meet the expectations, needs and demands of the current research policy in the country. Using the case study of the EAA, we look at ways to nurture and further exploration and implementation of disciplinary knowledge for resilient development of the living environment. „The Politics of Public Work“ by Michael Corr, on the other hand, tackles how his practice responds to the needs, expectations and demands of a contemporary society on a political level.

Interviews with artist Rosanne Van Klaveren and architect-cybernetician-composer Ranulph Glanville offer in-depth analysis on how to understand „togetherness“ and „creativity“. Rosanne explains how art has the possibility to create a parallel existence, a world similar to the actual world we inhabit but with a slightly different set of parameters and components. Ranulph points out how part of being creative is not to isolate oneself, but to look outwards into this enormous network of everything that „isn't me“, treating it as a resource.

Finally, „A modest challenge“ by Karli Luik anchors this chapter by foraging into contextual dynamism that shapes his creative architectural practice. He tells us stories that work often on the

junction of space and language and are his honest lessons from his personal creative practice itself, ranging from messing with infrastructure or executing artistic interventions to exercises in critical awareness and surfacing political agenda.

Altogether, we hope to hint at certain challenges concerning political agency of creative practice and design practice research in the academic realm but also in society at large.



## 5.2 Advancing research policy for creative practice

*On the design practice research potential at the Estonian Academy of Arts Faculty of Architecture and Faculty of Design*

*Veronika Valk*

Design is what links creativity and innovation (Sir George Cox, The Cox Review of Creativity in Business, Crown 2005). Design practice research offers a model to explore how such links between creativity and innovation *de facto* occur, what are the specifics of these bridgings and how to push them forward. The following article explores the challenges and opportunities that the academic realm in the fields of architecture and design in Estonia faces, looking at its political positioning in the cross-sectoral chain of innovation. In Estonia, the key academic institution advancing architecture and design, as well as implementer of design practice research is the Academy of Arts. Followingly, we look at the current status of disciplinary academia, considering what the academia can do well and where are the shortcomings, to arrive at suggestions for the future.

By and large, developing the design practice research potential at the Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA) Faculty of Architecture and Faculty of Design is framed by national research policy and the Estonian Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy 2014-2020. The lack of state-wide architecture and design policy implies that innovation and experimentation are deliberately in the hands of entrepreneurs in the private sector – architecture and design firms – and that the scientific research arising from academia is not expected to drive the field. Yet Estonia's internal market is rather small. Thus, such investment into more experimental and innovative content from private offices has been modest against the actual innovation potential in the country.

What limits the academic side? On one hand, according to Estonia's taxonomy of science, the research agenda of these two faculties, Faculty of Architecture and Faculty of Design, falls into the categories of Natural Sciences and Engineering (ETIS

classification 1. Architecture and Industrial Design; 12. Process Technology and Materials Science; 15. Construction and Municipal Engineering; 17. Energetics) or Engineering and Technology (Frascati Manual classification 2.1. Civil engineering (architecture engineering, building science and engineering, construction engineering, municipal and structural engineering and other allied subjects); 2.3. Other engineering sciences (specialised technologies of interdisciplinary fields, e.g. systems analysis and other allied subjects)). Such classification works well towards technology transfer. Yet on the other hand, the experimental work that is conducted at the two faculties belongs often intuitively rather to the cultural domain and not necessarily immediately to the economic sphere of profit oriented entrepreneurship.

The two faculties mentioned earlier aim to bring together national competence in the field of architecture, design, interior architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, urban studies regarding both craft as well as CAD/CAM (computer aided design and manufacturing). The research is undertaken often in collaboration with researchers from Tallinn University of Technology (TUT), Tallinn University (TLU) and Tartu University (UT). The aim of the faculties is to strengthen Estonia's capacity in advancing the living environment through innovation in architecture, design, materials research and related visualisation, simulation and digital fabrication technologies. The ambiguity of current national research policy regarding design practice research is revealed when we look at how the research directions – research groups – are distinguished by specific focus:

### 1. 3D Lab platform

CAD/CAM platform for design practice research is led by Dr Renee Puusepp (EAA), in collaboration with Martin Melioranski (EAA, MSc Advanced Architectural Design). The group examines technology transfers between high-innovative industries that stand on front edge in the development of new digitalised design and production tools. Synthetic modelling for architectural design and urban planning are part of the core agenda. The research looks into crossover between experimental architectural design and advanced environmental technologies. It investigates digital design workflow supported by novel modelling, evaluation and data exchange tools. This direction also aims at advancing creative concept modelling for architectural concept designs.

## 2. Conservation research and urban studies for innovative environments

in other words means learning from historic city centres and applying the research in urban design by using advanced digital tools. The urban studies department at the EAA is led by Prof Dr Maroš Krivy (EAA) and the research is undertaken in collaboration with Damiano Cerrano (EAA, Faculty of Architecture), Dr Renee Puusepp and the Department of Heritage Protection and Conservation. The scope is entirely within design practice research focusing on reconstruction of historic centres, representation of old towns and urban design for compact development. The research aims at developing innovative methods and cost efficient tools for digital representation of the cultural heritage. It explores how new 4D and higher-dimensional, inter-operable digital models can assist cultural heritage protection and revitalising old cities.

## 3. Materials research and embedded computing for active smart interiors agenda

is lead by Dr Kärt Ojavee (EAA, Faculty of Design), in collaboration with Siim Tuksam (EAA, Faculty of Architecture). They deal with research on materials that are able to behave and change depending on the environmental stimuli. Novel concepts are developed and experiments carried out that conclude with functioning prototypes. These experiments are supported by theoretical research, combining novel techniques and technologies with traditional crafts techniques.

## 4. Upcycling design research

is led by Dr Reet Aus (EAA, Faculty of Design). Research focuses on local design solutions for producing and handling sustainable garment textiles. Collaborators include Dr Harri Moora (Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre) and Miina Leesment, among others. The aim is to explore upcycling as a sustainable method for fashion design, investigating different approaches to waste upcycling through advanced technologies for both serially produced garments and one-off and unique designs. Here, research is geared towards using textile waste in order to lower the environmental impact of fashion design.



Figure 5.1  
Photographer:  
Tõnu Tunnel

## 5. Design and Engineering

Combining science, technology and design into an integrated creative discipline – is led by Prof Martin Pärn (TUT) and Ruth-Helene Melioranski (EAA/TUT). Collaborators include also Dr Sixten Heidmets and Dr Nithikul Nimkulrat (EAA, textile innovation), among others. The research aims at coupling advanced technologies and engineering competence with research in inclusive design, advancing cross-disciplinary approach to product development and innovation, as well as exploring advanced design solutions for inclusive environments. It looks for ways to implement problem-centered approach to design, investigating related intersections of innovation in design and engineering.

Parallel to those five strands above, Faculty of Architecture has – greatly through involvement in ADAPT-r project – since 2013 considerably invested in creative practice research through yet another lense, exploring case studies, communities of design practice, creative practice public behaviours, as well as triggers and drivers for change from the practitioner's perspective.

To gain scientific and technological momentum through design practice research, the two faculties have set out to strengthen existing partnerships and to establish new long-lasting networks with leading competence centres in design research for innovative environments in Europe and industry in Estonia. In political terms, the overall objective is to magnify the national innovation capacity in design practice research, contributing to two out of three key economic growth areas outlined by the Estonian Smart Specialisation Strategy: 1) the use of ICT horizontally through all sectors – in our case for industrial applications (including automation and robotics), and 2) more efficient use of resources – in our case, materials studies.

What can academia do well (or better than the private sector)? Initiate and participate in pan-European high-level joint projects in diverse design research for innovative environments. The scope of academia is also in training successors in the field of competence and facilitating access to gained knowledge for coming generations. The academia is also – to a certain extent – capable of drawing the attention of the industry and the wider public to design research contribution to economy, society and culture. Not only in Estonia but in Europe, as international cooperation partners involve main European centres of excellence in material research, digital fabrication and automation in the context of architectural and urban design for innovative living environment.

*Figure 5.2  
Installation  
„Lugeja“  
by 1st year  
architecture  
students at  
the Estonian  
Academy of  
Arts. Concept  
by Birgit Õigus.  
Photographer  
Paco Ulman.*





Design practice research model therefore offers us a novel and much needed way to reconnect the entrepreneurial dimension of architecture and design with their cultural one, within the framework of academia.<sup>107</sup> It offers us the opportunity to construct and nurture a much needed interchange for technological advancement with the entrepreneurial, cultural and societal endeavours of architecture and design, for the two poles to meet and mingle. Design practice research model, as it draws from active venturesome practitioners, essentially strengthens the entrepreneurial spirit of independent practitioners, inviting the venturesome practitioner (back) to the academic realm for actual cross-pollination of professional experience and expertise both from academic explorations and actual field work by architecture and design studios out there.

Yet encouraging innovation and diversity in architecture and design will require a comprehensive revision of the national research and innovation policy, allowing the industry professionals in the fields of architecture and design to benefit from, and to contribute to, the academia at large – its build-up of the skills for, and an understanding of, the new opportunities of digital fabrication, materials studies and cross-innovation in interrelation with other fields – more directly, more intensely.

Regarding funding and grants, the research policy in Estonia currently favours the more conventional model – the scientific research model still indeed very valid in natural sciences, engineering and technology. The grants are offered on the premise of prior success rate in scientific research, and this faces us with a challenge since design practice research does not enjoy a competitive scientific track record, at least not yet. It is challenging for design practice research to meet the standards and expectations of current understanding of what research in the fields of architecture and design is supposed to be.

In essence, the Estonian Research Council, a state foundation for research funding, offers two kinds of grants: institutional research funding (IUT) for financing high-level research and development, and personal research funding (PUT) to cover the costs of high-level R&D activities carried out by researchers or small research groups who are employed by a research and development institution. PUTs are meant for a) exploratory, and b) start-up research grants, whereas internationally highly regarded research groups that work under common leadership and have clearly

defined common goals are financed through the Development of Research Centres of Excellence measure, to support local top scientific research. The sums are allocated from the Structural Funds.

On the other hand, through Enterprise Estonia and its sub-units, the Ministry of Economic Affairs finances R&D programmes that involve innovation closer to the SME sphere of architecture and design: product development, co-operation with enterprises and entrepreneurs, and technology programmes for priority areas. Enterprise Estonia provides support for new companies as well as assistance to R&D activities of already active companies, NGOs and R&D institutions. The objective to increase the product development and technological capability of companies, but also the capability of research and development establishments to provide the commercialisable solutions. The cooperation between the research establishments and companies is encouraged, also the participation in international cooperation networks.

Closing the gap between the two streams of support mechanisms for research and innovation – one for academia, the other for SMEs – requires reconsideration of the overall understanding of coupling research with entrepreneurship. We need, at a state level, a clearer understanding of how innovation occurs not only in the fields of architecture and design but also in other domains. Design practice research model is one, and admittedly a convincing, way to bring academia and practice together, yet this model does not fall under either of the implemented support categories due to specific requirements and measures of current funding programmes. The Estonian Research Council ought to consider endeavours in venturesome creative practice equal to those in scientific advancement, while Enterprise Estonia should encourage entrepreneurs to benefit from design practice research.

107 'Design practice research' model as introduced by RMIT University and the ADAPT-r project.



## 5.3 The Politics of Public Work

*Michael Corr*

In this text I will describe pieces of my work in a way that may not strike the reader, immediately at least, as creative. I describe the policy, governance and workings of government departments around and behind the projects. I describe the economic, social and political context that directly, or indirectly, influences how this work is manifest. I intentionally avoid the use of overtly ‘architectural’ language to describe the work and my intention is to demonstrate that in the mundane and the banal, there are opportunities for different kinds of creative intervention. That there are possibilities for architecture, to influence change, in a different way to the prototypical response from architects or creative practitioners.

### Northern Ireland

In June 2002, the Northern Ireland Assembly launched the Review of Public Administration (RPA) with the remit of ‘reviewing the arrangements for the accountability, development, administration and delivery of public services in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Executive).

Prior to this, the pattern of Local Government in Northern Ireland was based on the Local Government Act 1971/72 and Government Departments, such as the Department of the Environment (DoE), Department for Social Development (DSD) and the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) were primarily responsible for a number of functions across the region, including planning, regeneration and community development.

The Local Government Act Northern Ireland 2014 is now in place and sets the legislative framework for a new way of working. Under Local Government Reform, a range of powers will transfer from central to local government, such as planning, roads, urban regeneration, community development, local economic development and local tourism.

This is potentially a sea change for how Northern Ireland goes about its business in terms of regeneration and has been reflected across the UK, in a move for greater local-level autonomy and the decentralisation of power, in theory at least. New creative

possibilities are emerging.

In April 2015, the number of councils in Northern Ireland reduced from 26 to 11, under Department of the Environment (DoE) plans to change local government. All council areas have changed their boundaries, their names and their branding. As part of the transfer, Belfast has added 53000 residents, 21000 households and 1000 business premises to its existing stock. From April 2015 councils in Northern Ireland are now responsible for creating development plans for the future of their areas and the teams to formulate these plans, requiring new creative skills and expertise.

*‘The new councils will be stronger, more efficient and will deliver more effective services. They will be citizen focused, responding to the needs, aspirations and concerns of their communities. In partnership with others, they will guide the future development of their areas’*

(Department of the Environment).

The General Power of Competence, introduced through the Localism Act 2011, now enables new councils, in broad terms, to act with the similar freedom of an individual and provide a council with the ability to act in its own interest, to develop creative and innovative approaches to addressing issues in its area.

As part of the UK Government’s wider localism agenda, GPC is intended not only to increase local authority powers

*‘but to give greater confidence in the scope of those powers and to signal that how those powers are used, is a matter for local authorities’*

(Department for Communities and Local Government, November 2011).

Launching the General Power of Competence in 2010, communities secretary Eric Pickles said councils would be able to do anything short of trying to

*“saddle up the horses, arm their citizens and invade France.”*

(The Guardian)

For Northern Ireland, a country emerging from conflict, the new system presents both creative challenges and opportunities. Politics and religion continue to play a divisive role in the region and present different challenges than those that might be experienced in other parts of the UK. The new system does however present the potential for a new approach to spatial planning, regeneration and

governance, and the removal of divisive barriers, both physical and psychological.

In September 2013 I became director of PLACE in Belfast Northern Ireland, which is an acronym for; Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Community, Environment.

We are a team of 7, with experience that crosses architecture, planning, urban design, law, sociology and art. We work with government departments and councils, creative practices and artists, professionals and researchers, community groups and voluntary organisations. We use creative approaches to tackle urban questions, based on a comprehensive understanding of the existing, multi-layered mille-feuille of issues in the built environment.

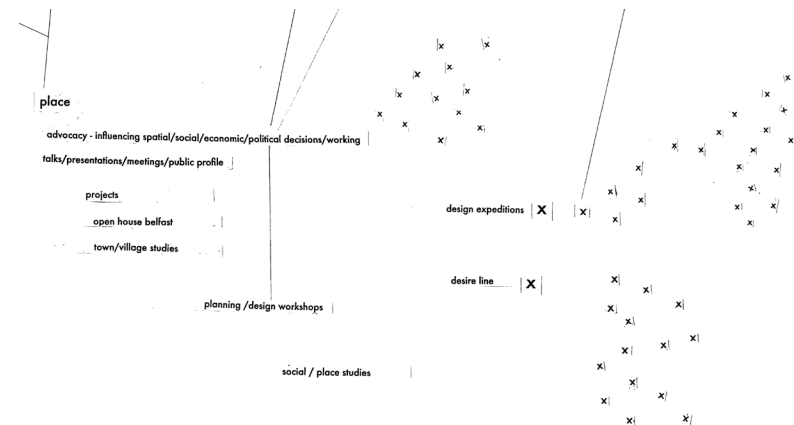
PLACE has been established as an organisation for ten years, however we have intensified our work in areas that respond to recent changes in local government in the past two years. The changes across government departments and within the councils of Northern Ireland present new possibilities for PLACE to shape policy and space, and our multi-disciplinary approach is in tune with changes happening in the governance of the country. At PLACE, we don't build anything directly, but we are part of the metabolism that creates new places.

Over the past two years we have worked with government departments and a number of councils across Northern Ireland in an advisory, capacity building role. We have created urban and rural plans, for the redevelopment and re-thinking of towns and villages across the region. We have produced studies and research to present complex narratives of places in terms of identity, formation and transformation.

Our office in central Belfast is positioned on the border between the central business district and the cultural quarter of the city. We chose to position ourselves in this part of the city as we see our role as working across these boundaries, as connective tissue. We renovated the space ourselves, taking over a vacant city centre property that had been empty for five years previously, to demonstrate how creative re-use of spaces like this in Belfast can make a difference to the forgotten parts of the city.

## London

Prior to establishing Pie architecture Ltd, I worked with a practice called East in London and then the Greater London Authority (GLA) at the Mayors office, as part of a team called Design for London. I also worked within Harrow Borough Council, as part of their planning and regeneration team. The work that I was involved with over this time was primarily of a public nature,



*Figure 5.3  
Diagram by  
Michael Corr  
of the work of  
PLACE*



*Figure 5.4  
Logo, Design  
for London*

masterplanning, urban design, public realm design and the construction of public buildings.

The education that I gained during this time, through these different roles, was instrumental in developing my work as an architect. Understanding the nature of public work, from funding timetables and procurement procedures to institutional protocols is essential if you are to work in this area of design.

With Pie, Fran Balaam and I, completed building projects with primary schools, such as St Josephs Primary School in Highgate and public realm projects as part of High Street 2012 (Olympic Legacy Project), the London Borough of Hillingdon in West London and in Rainham, the London Borough of Havering in East London.

In March 2011 The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, announced a £50m fund to 'boost regeneration and rejuvenate town centres at the very heart of local London communities' (London.gov.uk). The initiative was coordinated on behalf of the Mayor by the GLA, working closely with others in the London Development Agency, Design for London and Transport for London. The fund was intended to stimulate the economic growth of London's out of town centres, targeted at those areas that did not benefit directly from Cross Rail or Olympic Funding, two major projects being delivered around the same time.

In August of the same year, London experienced riots of a scale that had not been seen in the capital for some time. The Outer London Fund, with its emphasis on rebuilding high streets, was promoted as a creative response to addressing the degradation of high streets in a number of outer London boroughs.

Comparing the political voting sensibilities of the Boroughs across London in 2010 and in the recent 2015 elections, this clearly indicates a concentration of conservative voters at the edges of London. Whilst the Outer London Fund directed funding at deprived neighborhoods in the capital, it also proved a useful mechanism to direct funding to conservative council areas, from which the Conservative mayor gained support.

In 2012 Pie were successful in bidding for an Outer London Fund project in the London Borough of Bromley in south London. Our brief was entitled 'Bromley Welcome Strategy' comprising of shop front renewals, wayfinding, public realm works and bespoke street furniture, along the length of the high street in Bromley Town Centre. Our team was joined by Objectif, a design practice in south London who work at 'the conjunction of editorial design and its transposition into the architectural realm'.

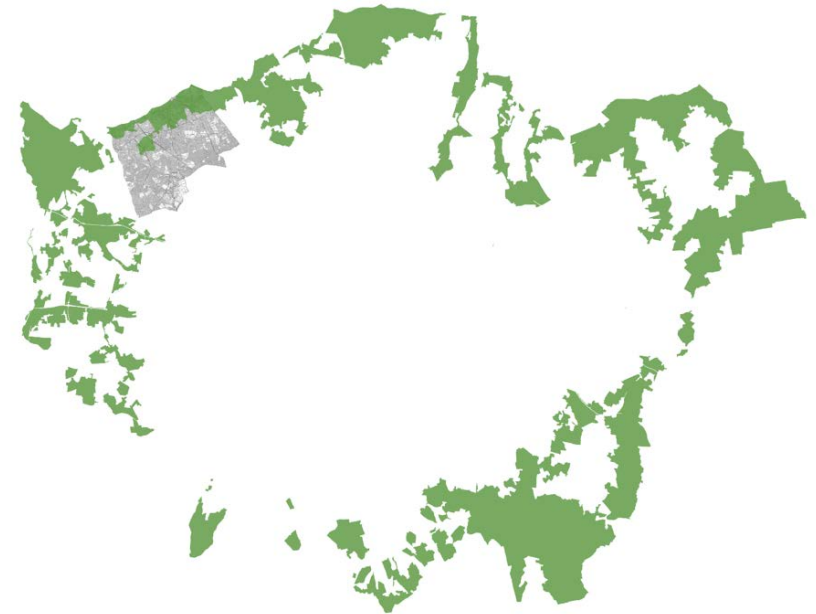


Figure 5.5  
Harrow  
Borough  
Council,  
London

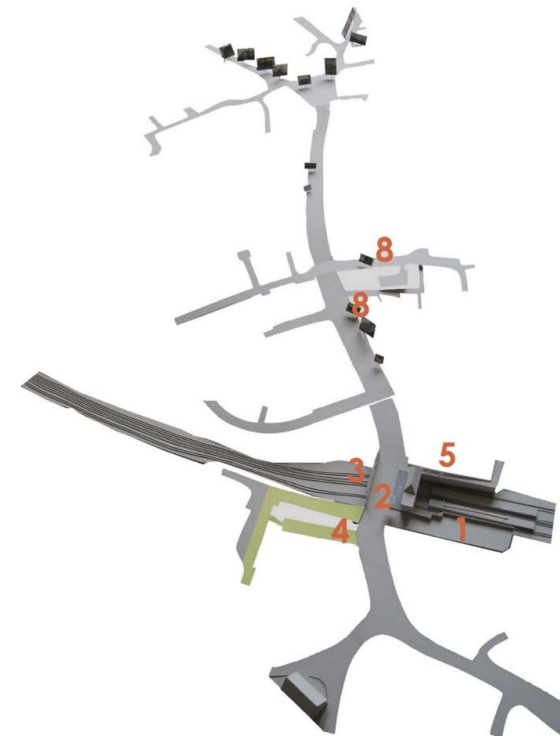


Figure 5.6  
Model locating  
strategic projects  
Bromley South  
London, by Pie



The project was directly managed by the London Borough of Bromley, however, as the funding for the project was largely funded through the Mayors Outer London Fund scheme, Design for London at the GLA, managed the high level delivery of the project, inline with the objectives of the OLF.

On our initial visits to Bromley Town Centre it was clear that Bromley was not a town in need of significant OLF investment, when compared to other struggling town centres in the capital. It has a healthy, bustling shopping core and a small amount of high street vacancy, when compared with other centres. It was clear that the investment in this area was a gesture of another type and as consultants, I believe that we had a moral decision to make, whether to add more 'shine' to the retail and public realm offer, or whether to offer something different.

Pie worked closely with Objectif on the shop front renewal and wayfinding strategy of the project, sharing an interest in proposals that were specific to the place and the people. Meetings were held with every shop owner, to identify their needs and requirements and understand the character of their shop. Detailed survey drawings were produced of each shop, and bespoke proposals were developed that responded to the personality of both the buildings and the people who we met.

Street furniture was designed by Pie at arrival points in the town centre such as around existing Transport for London bus stops and the railway station. The TfL standard bus stop design was examined in detail in terms of sitting height, width, material, RAL colour, structure and finish. Proposals for the seating then developed as a counter to, but in dialogue with, the TfL stop, adding generosity in seating width, detail, material and finish. Detailed consideration was given to the positioning of fixings, hidden as opposed to exposed, and footing details that were recessed, rather than surface fixed with steel plates. The finish of the steel structure, was in a high street standard 'signal grey' colour to blend anonymously into the language of the high street. Existing paving was removed before construction and then carefully replaced by cutting around the feet of the seating, adjusting to level changes across the length of the site.

Although the variety of proposals that we completed were scattered across different parts of the centre of Bromley, they were also linked in their contextual qualities, strategic ambition and detailed design. The intention was to make a sum that was greater than the individual parts, pieces that would both embed themselves into the existing high street and accommodate new activity, acting as



Figure 5.7  
Mquette of  
Bromley Bus  
Stop, Scale 1:33



Figure 5.8  
Completed  
Bromley Bus  
Stop in-situ,  
photograph by  
Ben Blossom



heightened points of generosity and experience in Bromley Town Centre.

### **Al Addesseh, Jerusalem**

Al Addasseh is a large site that is situated in North Jerusalem, north of an area called Beit Hanina. The site is predominantly undeveloped open land, characterized by a large hill (tel Addasseh) and a cluster of 160 existing buildings lie along the east and south periphery of the site, houses that are considered illegal settlements by the Israeli government.

Pie were invited by the International Peace and Cooperation Centre (IPCC), working with UN Habitat, to take part in a 3 month studio programme based in East Jerusalem, to develop housing proposals for the site at Al Addasseh. The team was made up of 15 international professional architects, planners and urban designers, working together to produce a masterplan for 2500 houses, on a site that was designated for new housing within the 2020 masterplan of Jerusalem.

The area was designated for Palestinian development in 2008 after extensive lobbying by the IPCC. This decision led to the freezing of demolition orders on the existing 160 houses on the site, for an unlimited period, to allow time for the development by the IPCC of a legal/zoning base for the legalization process of the existing 160 buildings.

*'Upon approval of the detailed plan, al Addasseh will be the largest planned Palestinian neighborhood in East Jerusalem with a capacity for 2500 housing units. The neighborhood will provide public services not only to Addasseh, but also to the whole of northern Jerusalem and will act as an important development model to apply to other areas of East Jerusalem.'*

(IPCC)

The brief issued from the IPCC stated:

- Making a living neighborhood that provides not only for residential areas, but also areas for recreation, work, education and public events.
- Creation of a 'green urban fabric' that can serve as a model for other East Jerusalem communities. The green fabric should include open spaces, sports facilities and walkable streets.
- Adopting a 'harmonious planning' strategy to ensure integration of Addasseh with the existing adjacent

Figure 5.9 Al  
Adesseh site,  
West Bank,  
Palestine

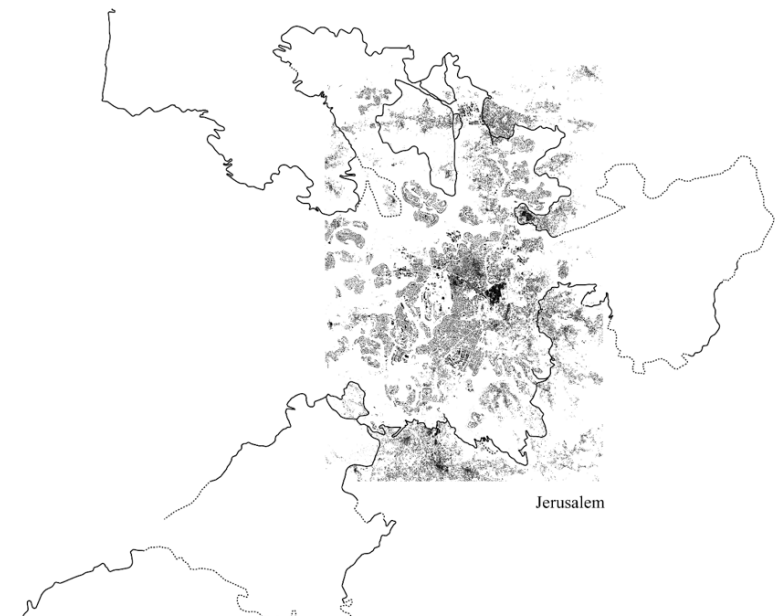


Figure 5.10  
Map locating  
Jerusalem and  
dividing walls/  
territories

communities of Beit Hanina on a physical and social level.

- Creating an open park at existing archaeological area to be the first of its kind in East Jerusalem.

Detailed briefing sessions were held at the initial stages of the project, where the IPCC provided the group with baseline information, maps, existing proposals, policy information and housing documentation. The political situation in Israel and Palestine is volatile, complicated and nuanced and the initial phase of the project was essential in understanding the historical and political background of the place together with existing planning/policy frameworks and current socio-political agendas. We had meetings with writers and lawyers, such as Raja Shehadeh, author of *Palestinian Walks* and Human Rights Lawyer in Ramallah in the West Bank and Shadia Touqan, Regeneration and Heritage officer in Jerusalem, to understand the situation from different perspectives. We visited existing housing developments, including Israeli settlements in Israel and Palestine, and new Palestinian housing developed in the West Bank, such as Rawabi, a new 6000 unit housing development.

Over a number of years, through previous projects and teaching/research, Pie developed a careful methodology to approach projects at both a building and urban scale. With a team of five people, we began mapping the site in Al Addasseh carefully and methodically, in what we refer to in practice as Experiential Mapping. We divided the site into equal squares, that were distributed between our team and each section of the site was recorded in significant detail. When pieced together, the large map uncovered patterns in the landscape, a variety of flora and fauna, archeology, man made boundaries/divisions, such as walls and fences and the presence of different communities of people. We mapped the edges of the site, recorded conversations, meetings and stories with existing inhabitants and pieced together a narrative of the place and its identity.

We developed initial proposals around a series of landscapes that were identified through the mapping process. The form of housing developed from the landscape and topography of the site, in terms of scale, layout and massing and housing typologies from research work undertaken into local, traditional housing typologies and contemporary housing types. Through the understanding of the context and the people, we made proposals that negotiated with the situation as uncovered. The streets we developed knitted the site into existing walking routes and donkey trails, that were embedded within the existing and wider context.

The piece of work that was produced was ultimately an

*Figure 5.11  
Assembling  
pieces of  
experiential  
drawing, East  
Jerusalem*



*Figure 5.12  
Landscapes  
and donkey  
trails, site Al  
Adesseh, by  
Pie*





anti-masterplan, a plan that was able to flex and adjust to both site conditions and changes over time. International guest critics, Israeli and Palestinian planners and UN Habitat critiqued the work regularly during the studio and the outcomes of the research was subsequently exhibited in London at the CASS.

### Tallinn, Estonia

The late 1980s and early 1990s were a critical period for a number of reasons both economically within the wider European Union and with regard to the emergence of a more Unified European Economic and Political architecture, post the collapse of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Perestroika and Glasnost. Of crucial importance to Britain at this time, was its role as a strong economic centre and a counter to the emerging Euro-Zone, with the Bundesbank as leader and pace setter.

It was within this context that the IRA detonated a bomb in central London in 1992, blowing up the Baltic Exchange building, situated at 1 St Marys Axe, where Fosters 'Gherkin' now stands, a bomb which killed three people.

In 2016 the Architecture Museum in Tallinn assembled the salvaged pieces of the Baltic Exchange building for a new exhibition entitled Face to Face. As part of this project, I organised a series of meetings and conversations with former IRA prisoner Jake Mac-Siacais in Belfast, to provide an analysis of the motivations behind the IRA bombing, economically, socially and politically that contextualise the objects on display from a very different perspective. These conversations have since been published as part of the book that accompanies the exhibition. What emerged through this work is the weight and resonance these fragments and pieces of buildings have, in relation to the wider social, economic and political issues of our time.

*'Now, let's put to rest, once and for all, the distortions or outdated thinking that has caused this crisis. Our NATO Alliance is not aimed "against" any other nation; we're an alliance of democracies dedicated to our own collective defence. Countries like Estonia and Latvia and Lithuania are not "post-Soviet territory." You are sovereign and independent nations with the right to make your own decisions. No other nation gets to veto your security decisions.'*

President Obama (September 2015, Tallinn).

Figure 5.13  
Face to Face,  
The Story of  
the Baltic  
Exchange, by  
Architecture  
Museum  
Tallinn



Through spending time in Estonia, I have been physically drawn to research the border area of Narva, a town to the east of Estonia that borders Russia. It is a complex situation that mirrors many of the conditions that I have encountered in Belfast and also Palestine from a social, political and also physical context. With recent happenings in Crimea and Ukraine, it is an area of Europe that feels vulnerable, not to any particular side, but vulnerable none the less. Drawing this border area and writing about this place in the Estonian architecture journal MAJA has allowed me an opportunity to explore this vulnerability from a spatial, social and political perspective, which are intertwined in the landscape.

## Teaching

A symbiotic relationship between teaching and practice has been developed over seven years, where projects that are worked on in practice have an effect on studio teaching, and vice versa. It is the kind of teaching that I have been brought up on, so to speak, by first studying at London Metropolitan University with East (www.east.uk.com) and now through teaching at the CASS London, having run Studio 9 there for six years with Fran Balaam.

Figure 5.14 Maja, August 2016, Promenade by Michael Corr



*'As educators we walk a tightrope that reflects this balance. On the one hand, we need to provide students with the practical skills and knowledge to be useful within current practice, and on the other, we need to provide them with the confidence and bravery to question and extend current orthodoxies. Fail to do both and we condemn our graduates to be either frustrated stars without the skills to apply their vision, or worker drones without the confidence to challenge their lot.'*

Robert Mull (Dean and director of Sir John Cass School of Architecture - Dezeen)

It is important, in my view, that students understand the social, political and economic context of a project, so that they can alter the status quo. The studio briefs that we have set in Studio 9, in the previous six years, have been based in Belfast, Glasgow, East London and Israel/Palestine, all areas in which we have worked in practice. The students have benefited from the knowledge of invited architecture critics, but also those who procure, manage, fund and deliver this work. In turn these critics have benefited from understanding the extensive research work that students undertake in projects and the provocation that student proposals can make against the status quo.

Figure 5.15 Confluence of river and border, Narva, East Estonia





## Confluence

The pieces of work that I have presented here are different streams of my work as an architect in practice, teaching and advocacy. The confluence of these streams are territories such as borders, peripheries and edges, where politics, policies, people and places meet. Through the PhD process, I wish to articulate the change that occurs, when these ways of working as an architect, combine with these territories. At this stage in the PhD, I see that one of the agents of change that has emerged and is consistent across these projects, is the act or process of negotiation. Negotiation can be described as the crafting of outcomes through dialogue and I see the 'dialogue' in these projects as a creative dialogue with space, politics, economy and society. My creative role as an architect in these projects is finding the appropriate means of negotiation in each situation, to shape the conversation, to provide the space in the place or the policy, to accommodate change.



*Figure 5.16  
Studio 9,  
Michael Corr  
and Fran  
Balaam*

## 5.4 Rosanne Van Klaveren – in search of the temporary feeling of togetherness

*Veronika Valk*

Rosanne van Klaveren is a Dutch artist living in Belgium who has been residing in Tallinn this spring as an ADAPT-r fellow. Following her talk at the Estonian Academy of Arts Faculty of Architecture guest speaker series, we used the opportunity to ask her a few questions about her focus on the possibilities of artistry, creativity and new media to create a temporary feeling of “togetherness” during participatory practices. During many years of community art practice van Klaveren frequently experienced the burden of distance when working in communities as an outsider. Such distance is not beneficial to the collaboration, or to the end results. She therefore researches how shared media use can build a metaphorical bridge in between the “us” and “them”, as a creative space for expression. Because the us-and-them dichotomy is much clearer among indigenous communities, van Klaveren has conducted this research mainly through the realization of two projects which concern the Arctic people: an online platform with a focus on Arctic food and an interactive road-movie. Her “the between” position touches artists: think of Gloria Anzaldúa’s writings on borderlands being in a constant state of transition, or the “in-between” mentioned by anthropologists and ethnographers. Jumping back and forth in her practice between the artistic and the academic, van Klaveren has found that the “in-between” and the “borderland” relate best to the terrain she has positioned herself.

*Veronika Valk*

What is your take on “expressive spaces”?

*Rosanne Van Klaveren*

*Expressive spaces are locations, or even situations, where one can express oneself. For example, a social medium platform can be an expressive space, or a bar at the local football club. During (artistic) participatory practices and*



*Figure 5.17  
Rosanne Van  
Klaveren.  
Photo by Reio  
Avaste.*

*community art, it is common to modify, alter or create such spaces for expression to occur. With human relations and social context as their point of departure, many contemporary artists handle a varied range of skills, methods and tools to create space or to moderate circumstances for shared activities. These kinds of practices are usually not held in the white cube settings of Art with a distant capital A, wherefore art has built a bridge towards society, away from aristocratic tendencies. Artistic participatory practices can establish connections between people and strengthen or even create communities. The way participatory artists shape their expressive space can differ as greatly as the artists themselves. These spaces can merge with physical places or can exist in virtual environments only, or do both.*

... and on “experience of space”?

*This for me relates to (re)shaping spaces for participation. Art has the possibility to create a parallel existence, a world similar to the actual world we inhabit but with a slightly different set of parameters and components. Certain aspects of our world can be enlarged or ignored in this representational reality. Hence, experiences relevant to our present day existence are shaped and communicated. Also, relationships can be made visible or practiced through art. In his widely referred “relational aesthetics”, Nicolas Bourriaud described the notion of relational arts as a linking element and a principle of dynamic agglutination, “...a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space” (Bourriaud, 2002). In such expressive spaces, participants can creatively and imaginatively share thoughts and experiences. Less burdened by limitations of knowledge systems or world views, these spaces enable different kinds of knowledge to merge.*

How about “engaging spaces”?

*In my own art practice I often created online story*

*spaces. In the Braintec project, for example, people were invited to engage in a science fiction story by writing diaries about their virtual experiences as test subjects for a medical research company. Not only the company's website, but also a second site with virtual diaries was created as the expressive space of this project. To infiltrate physical reality, this story space was expended with company ballpoints, leaflets, flags and other promotional material used during presentations and exhibitions held at different locations.*

You often talk about the “Us-and-Them” dichotomy. What is this about?

*As a response to my experiences in community art and in contact with indigenous communities, I am investigating how it is possible to create a temporary feeling of togetherness. In my opinion distance is not beneficial to collaboration, or to end results. Difference, on the other hand, is valuable. People are allowed to be different and they better stay themselves, whatever “us” or “them” they belong to. The inclusion of different experiences is always one of the added values of participatory practices. I believe though, that during the act of participation, artistic and creative practices can bring people more together, temporarily. The act of expression and shared activity can build a metaphorical bridge where people can meet in the middle, in between. A temporary feeling of togetherness, also to be described as a feeling of solidarity or connectedness, can occur in this shared moment, which will diminish when people end the activity and go back to the “us” that distances “them”.*

What might those “spaces for shared activities” look like or be concerned with?

*One example would be the Food Related project where recipes, facts, news items, concerns, and other content related to Arctic food and food culture are collected on an online platform, while workshops and other events are organized to support this sharing. As a virtual meeting place, the platform tries to build bridges*

*between the different Arctic peoples: a bridge that can overcome physical distances through virtual contact; a bridge that can overcome language problems through automatic translation software; a bridge that can support transitions and changes through exchange of experiences and discussions; and a bridge that can strengthen dignity and self-respect through positive cultural display and attention for contemporary issues. Just as food has been shared within the Arctic for so many years already, thoughts about food can be shared upon this platform. The artistic approach turns it into a nice place to explore and makes it enjoyable to contribute, while the food related information forms a varied collection that is sometimes fun to read and often food for thought.*

Yet in terms of physical appearance of your artwork, how do you imagine these shared spaces: as “inside” or “outside”?

*Wherever possible, I try to turn outsiders into insiders. For example, the best way for viewing the Nivva to Nenets road-movie, will be as an art installation that experiments with possibilities of (new) media to create a temporary feeling of togetherness, “to be experiences” while watching the movie (together). When the film is projected from different angles on the fabric of a chum, from the inside, it will attract and invite people to enter the installation space and become insiders. Once seated, on cushions on the ground around a console, one can navigate the road-movie and choose story-lines on a touchscreen. Sitting together with other viewers, circled around the console as if it is a fire to feed, an imaginary connection to traditional Nenets life can be felt. It would be the aim of this installation space to create favorable circumstances for an interest in the Nenets to occur. The road-movie hopefully creates awareness of the contemporary situation of this reindeer herding people, as a transfer of knowledge, this could lead to further discussions.*

*In combination with the paradoxical dilemmas that are discussed within this documentary, this project invites to reflect upon human behavior that is typical for the arts: an artistic visualization of human thoughts, views and actions.*

This interview was published on Wadermedia on 30 May, 2014: <http://www.wadermedia.com/rosanne-van-klaveren-in-search-of-the-temporary-feeling-of-togetherness>.



## 5.5 Powering up – Interview with Ranulph Glanville

*Veronika Valk*

Ranulph Glanville (+2014) was Professor Emeritus of Architecture and Cybernetics at University College London, also Research Senior Tutor and Professor in Innovation Design Engineering at Royal College of Art in London. In addition, he was Professor of Architecture at the University of Newcastle in Australia and Senior Professor of Research Design at KU Leuven—LUCA in Belgium. He was Principal of CybernEthics Research and president of the American Society for Cybernetics, and has published in excess of 350 academic publications. He had a diploma in Architecture from the Architectural Association in London, a PhD in Cybernetics and a second PhD in Human Learning from Brunel University, which also awarded him a DSc in Cybernetics and Design in recognition of his work. He was an architect, composer and artist as well as a cybernetician.

Looking at the multiplicity of fields and activities Glanville is involved with, one might wonder what kind of a person lies hidden behind the titles? When asked what his hobbies are, Glanville responds that these are the things he's not doing just at the very moment when that question is asked. He has discovered that his life is much better when he doesn't chase ambition, when he doesn't try to over-organise what might occur, when he doesn't grasp for things that he doesn't want. He has given up trying to be "successful" — he finds that he's much better having influence rather than power. He tries not to control events but believes in situations and actions that increase the value of the lives of the others and his own.

He says he's good at building new opportunities and new insights — in general, he's interested in increasing individual freedom. While teaching, he doesn't suggest things to do or paths to take expecting that people would actually follow his advice — he'd be quite shocked, in fact, to find that they did what he proposed. Instead, he aims to loosen people up and show them there are possibilities so that they're able to find what they can do or discover who they are — in other words, Glanville looks to help them release their own potential. He lets his students lead. This follows the model of his own kindergarten, based on the practice of Friedrich Fröbel who believed that children, like flowers, know the best how to grow up themselves. On a different note, curiously

*Figure 5.18*

*Ranulph  
Glanville.*

*Photo by Reio  
Avaste.*



enough, teaching “the act of designing” is in his opinion very close to psychotherapy. Altogether he describes himself as an “old-fashioned liberal educator”— not an architect or cybernetician — who believes that it is important to create the conditions in which individual freedom can be best expressed and developed.

Veronika Valk

How to enable and empower creativity?

Ranulph Glanville

*I must first point out that I'm not interested in studies of creativity — the majority of stuff that is produced ends up being either too naive, unsympathetic or just an advert for personal opinion. In order to analyse creativity, in order to develop an understanding of it, people often do something that destroys it. It's like biologists, who studied life in a Petri dish by killing things. The way in which they studied the activity of living was to kill something! According to Humberto Maturana, life is the process of maintaining itself — which he called autopoiesis. He changed things so that you didn't have to destroy the thing you wanted to examine in order to talk about it. What I think happens all too often is that we destroy creativity in order to talk about it — for instance, creativity to me is about wholes and not about breaking things apart, into particles and procedures and so on. When we do that — break the whole into parts and mechanical procedures — we are destroying the very thing we want to examine by using the wrong sort of model. That's why I'm generally not interested in discussions of creativity — what is it, how is it etc.*

*However, another approach would be to measure the number of experiences we have, which we can approximate to the number of brain states or something else like that. If we take your experiences, add them to mine and let them interact, the result is not twice as many experiences but, actually, a square of the number of the experiences. Let's say we all have, within our lifetime, roughly the same number of experiences (this is not about the exact numbers but about the sense of scale) then the combinations between all the experiences of both of us is*

*the square of the experiences either of us has. If it's three people, it's the cube. If it's four people, then it's to the power of four. And when it's six or seven billion people then it's to the power of six or seven billion. This is a staggeringly large number. If you wanted to write out 2 to the power of six or seven billion in full, you could start right here today and you would die before you've finished writing that number. These unbelievably big numbers are beyond practical computation. We could say that the richness of everything that is not “me” vastly exceeds the vastness of what is “me”. That is to suggest there is always, in the world around each of us, a whole lot of material we may mine. One way of being creative is not to isolate oneself, but to look outwards into this enormous network of everything that isn't me, treating it as a resource. In the world around you there is an infinitude of ideas, of understandings that might have never occurred to you. I suggest that one way of sourcing and amplifying creativity is to look outside yourself. Very simple.*

The longer the lifespan the more potential experiences to be shared. Research into longevity, for instance the mechanisms of telomerase, aims to considerably increase the lifespan of humans. What will happen when the average life span extends to 120 years and beyond and when the amount of experiences of a 100-year-old would be significantly different from a 30-year-old?

*Of course we learn things as we live but, on the other hand, we tend to slow down with age. Our mental model becomes more complex as we grow older and that makes it more difficult to change it. I find mindless and unconsidered efforts to extend life irresponsible and disgraceful.*

*We don't have enough work for people, not enough resources, we live way beyond our means — and now we want to make this worse by living longer, quite possibly in such a condition that will require a lot of support and expenditure (not just of money). Anyhow, we should be wary of these kinds of predictions. We might go on living a bit longer. But for many of us it might be really boring.*

*I watched my stepfather die a few years back and I think he died of boredom. We run out of energy and interest, we become inert, an exhausting drain on everyone, starting with ourselves.*

Yet we can find 25- or 35-year-olds who are also quite blasé?

*Not, perhaps, blasé, but, rather, (I think) depressed. I guess that comes from believing that there aren't any opportunities. Maybe not in Estonia but in much of Western Europe and in the US we have bred a generation that doesn't understand that things don't just happen for it in some magical and detached way. We take our children everywhere, we buy everything for them and then they leave home and discover that life isn't like that, that money and support are finite and quite constrained, that all those things we want (and which our parents provided) no longer just appear. They're unequipped to find resources. They don't know how to look after themselves, how to get hold of finances — they don't see that they have to do this. Thus, they see themselves as cheated, and the world as lacking opportunities, as not fitting their expectations. They are also, I fear, unaware of the necessary, individual responsibility that is part of the lives of each of us.*

*We used to believe that the "Spaceship Earth" was an infinite resource. Even though nature has an extraordinary ability to right itself, I have come to believe the planet cannot take what we're demanding from it nowadays. It cannot provide for the increasing wish to own things nor can it repair the mess that we make.*

What would be the way out?

*Younger people, the hope remains. When I teach, I'm setting up situations that create opportunities for other people — you have to help the people you teach to find in themselves their relation to the subject and thus to power themselves up. By doing this I hope to enable them to more effectively release their creativity, passion,*

*new ideas and insights. Using the metaphor of the child's game, a lot of our education nowadays is about making people fit into holes shaped by and for society rather than making society something which can accept many different-shaped people. Yet individual freedom cannot be expressed at the expense of everyone else's freedom. This freedom is not absolute — it is neither what the Soviets nor what the Americans meant by "freedom".*

Estonia witnesses quite a lot of emigration despite the fact that the country is nowadays free to redefine what freedom is.

*When you have to rebuild a country and it doesn't quite work and people drift off, then they might appear to be some sort of traitor, right? I suggest to get rid of the notion of nationality altogether, and with that the idea of the traitor. It seems to me that nationality, loyalty and duty are amongst the most damaging things we've ever invented. If nobody was loyal we'd not have institutional wars. Duty is loyalty with stronger obligation. Perhaps we should just be loyal to other people: yet it could also be that even that loyalty is unnecessary.*

What is necessary then?

*If you slow things down then you see nuances that you wouldn't normally see. That is revealing — slowness has a particular quality of its own. It is difficult to slow things down and to simultaneously keep alert. Being caught in between, being a bit lost, is good for a human being. Things have their own time, and we should learn to enjoy this, rather than imposing our own, usually rushed time. A little slowness, living in the now, and a reduction of the significance of the nation state might really help us.*

What is cybernetics for you?

*A way of thinking. In 1967, as an architecture student, I had to design a supermarket. I hated supermarkets. My way out of this was to design an*

*anti-supermarket—something that might be called “internet shopping” today. Someone told me that I should see a “cybernetician” and went to visit this man named Gordon Pask. He was remarkable, even if difficult at times. I spoke with him in a confused way for what I remember as three hours, after which Gordon summarised what I had said with total clarity and crisp precision in three minutes. I thought to myself: “I want some of this!” I wanted such clarity, purity and distillation of thinking that Gordon had demonstrated. I knew he was extraordinarily clever but I also realised that some of it had to do with the subject that he was involved in — in other words, cybernetics. I realised that there was something in cybernetics that released the ability to think in such clear way.*

*So I went to study it. A lot of my cybernetics is philosophical in nature, a lot of it goes against conventional cybernetics, which is in general focused on purposeful systems — systems with goals. I’m just as interested in systems that don’t have goals. So I am better at keeping my eyes open for opportunities than in taking them. I’m not like Rachel Whiteread who (I’m informed) planned her career day by day. When the Japanese plan out their lives with great precision then they do it strategically, for life not to get too complicated. In contrast, Whiteread’s aim was to become a superstar. I’m exactly the opposite of her. Instead of trying to take control of my life, I’m responsive rather than proactive, and I find I’m much better at this. If I leave myself open to see possibilities and if I leave space for people to offer “gifts” to me, then I often get some extraordinary opportunities which I could never have hoped for. That’s the opposite of the cybernetic goal-oriented system. In cybernetics, I’m interested in the transcendental questions or frameworks within which cybernetics happens, which we tend to assume in order to be able to act. I’m interested in what those assumptions are: what they imply. In that sense I’m someone who looks at the foundations and questions them — someone interested in the relationship between “freedom” and the “machine”. The most remarkable characteristic of human*

*beings is that we create patterns. Without the ability to create patterns we wouldn’t be able to think. That’s what I do: generally at a rather abstract level.*

How about the patterns that we create collectively as a society?

*I’m interested in a society that minimises the impact of society and maximises the space for the individual. The idealistic aims of communism, democracy and anarchy are not really that different. The means by which you get there are different and the sorts of distortions that each encourages are very different. Communism gives bullying and an elite which says what the society wants — you have to trust people to have socialism — it’s not enough to trust yourself to make choices for the benefit of people. The socialists are in essence paternalists. Democracy is a very poor mechanism for deciding the will of people since it’s about majority, it’s clumsy, it cannot be tuned — but at least it recognises that the world is made up of individuals. The problem with anarchy is that it’s generally considered unsustainable. But there are self-organised groups (such as Alcoholics Anonymous etc.) that somehow sustain themselves even though they are anarchic. And I find that immensely interesting.*

This interview was published in an abbreviated version in Estonian in cultural weekly Sirp on July 4, 2014, and on Wadermedia in English on July 7, 2014: <http://www.sirp.ee/s1-artiklid/arhitektuur/2014-07-03-19-44-28>; <http://www.wadermedia.com/powering-up-interview-with-ranulph-glanville>.



## 5.6 Building a Community of Practice

*Notes from a lecture by Ranulph Glanville on April 23, 2014 in Mustpeade Maja in Tallinn, Estonia*

*Veronika Valk*

### **By way of introduction:**

My talk is on thoughts about design, on knowing, on designing and researching and on doing design research. You will, of course, recognise that I talk in generalisations and hence in the distortions and over-simplifications associated with generalising.

For Vitruvius (1999), the original architectural theorist, architecture meant something much wider than making buildings. For Vitruvius, architecture has to satisfy three requirements: it must be well built (“firmitas” in Vitruvius’ original Latin) and satisfy functional needs (“utilitas”). The third requirement concerns delight (“venustas”). I think it is the delight that we as designers most enjoy, and is, I think, our great contribution. It is what we like to give our clients. It is something others can rarely give. It is also the hardest bit, not least because it is very difficult to articulate delight precisely. But we can recognise it: it’s a tacit quality.

### **On the character of designing:**

To design or (as the word came into English, in two variants) to designate or to draw was originally a verb. Later on it became a noun, that is, a substantive. What turned it into an output of an activity rather than that activity? It is essentially a verb—an activity—which is the main way I shall use it here.

Designers have a very particular aspiration: while the scientist describes the world as it is, the designer is not interested in describing what is: (s)he wants to change, to act on, that world.

### **About the relationship of problems and solutions, problem solving:**

In contrast to an approach which attempts to scientise design, we can look at design as a way to create a solution which, in turn, tells

us what the problem was. It is exactly the opposite way round to the approach of problem solving where we define a problem to get to its solution. Therefore the relationship of problem and solution is critical in design, whether the problem precedes the solution or the solution precedes the problem. In design, at least as I mean it (contrasted to science), the solution that precedes the problem.

### **On design and engineering:**

Engineers approach design very differently. I have come to the conclusion that the designing we as designers do takes the form of a circular process where we generate a conversation with ourselves—we draw, we look at our drawings and see in them things that we have not thought of before. We are surprised. We re-iterate the process. It is about marking and viewing, marking and viewing ... This is the activity that is at the centre of designing, and of design creativity. It is why the solution defines the problem. It is a really significant means through which we can gain creativity in what we do, and through which we end up doing something very unlike what we originally thought we would.

### **On research:**

The word research, in English, comes from French, going back to Latin: “to search” means to look for, to seek. The “re-” at the beginning of the word does not mean “to repeat”, “again”, but “intensely”, “in depth”, “very seriously”. Therefore, to research is to seek intensely, i.e., with rigour. In my view, the most important thing about research is rigour. This does not mean that we make it fit a particular pattern or that we impose a ready-made method upon it—method is a tool, a means. Method might sometimes help us to maintain rigour. Yet rigour is about not stopping at difficulties but going on despite them, until you have nowhere else to go. It is insistence on depth. If we hope through research only to produce repeatable knowledge, of bodies of knowledge that we know fit together—we might miss the essence of rigour.

We are concerned in research about placing our ideas in the context of other ideas. Ideas do not exist by themselves but in the company of others, created by other people, in the company of other people—a literature review is in that sense a “thank you” list, since we have learned from these people. It is a way I can acknowledge I have benefitted from and maybe also disputed with someone through their work, and thus I have got to where I am.

**On novelty:**

Ideally, a design should demonstrate novelty. Using a distinction I extend from Margaret Boden (2002), there are 3 classes of novelty: a personal, psychological novelty (new to me); a historical novelty (new to everyone); and a radical novelty (rethink the world!). Radical novelty is so extraordinarily new that it revolutionises how we, human beings, see the world. The majority of us find the first one most fascinating, not many of us attain the third.

We have a tendency to think of all research as necessarily following the scientific model. But it does not have to. There was research before there was modern science. Science tends to be identified with something post-Newtonian ... science tries to make its results repeatable by avoiding individual personal differences, building on the notion of an idealised observer (who, I insist, is a figment). The idealised scientific observer is remote and has no effect on what (s) he observes. But of course there is no observation at all if there is no observer. In the end, the observer is us. In areas where we make things, especially, research needs to recognise the presence of the observer and the difference each individual observer makes.

The cybernetician Heinz von Foerster remarked “Objectivity is a subject’s delusion that observing can be done without him”. And the German philosopher, Hans Vaihinger (1911), reminded us that what science gives us—because scientific knowledge derives from descriptions and exists in the explanations that we make—is knowledge that is not factual (although fact is a word that has changed meaning in English: the Latin “factum” is a thing made, not an immutable found). It describes what he called an “as if” world. What Vaihinger’s science offers us is knowledge that is a viable—a knowledge that continues to be treated as knowledge for as long as it continues to hold.

**On knowing:**

Even when studying science, I was always essentially interested in epistemology. There is more than one way of knowing. Aristotle tells us of tacit, skill-based knowledge, *phronesis*—knowledge that guides what we do with our hands (for instance) without needing formalised instructions—but also of intellectual knowledge, *sophia*. For Aristotle, *sophia* was superior to *phronesis* while, nevertheless, depending on *phronesis* and always returning to it. This creates a circle: we get our intellectual knowledge from doing and we test it by returning to doing. To my mind, that makes it very difficult to talk about *sophia* as superior: it places *phronesis* and *sophia* on the same level. The doing, the making, is as significant as the thinking.

Theory is not superior to practice, and it does not make sense to impose theory on practice. Theory can be tremendously useful and creative but it is not the only possible way of knowing. Sometimes we need to impose practice on theory.

Using the terms I prefer, “knowledge of” is what scientists and engineers are after, but “knowledge for” is what designers need—for it enables us to change the world. The way that engineers work is associated with problematisation. Designers work is associated with solutions. We might and should question the assumption that we must understand the world in order to be able to act on, for or in it.

**On ecology:**

There is still a strong view that science provides the only way, especially in the USA. The value of our work is judged by the number of citations made to it, a false and spurious metricisation. In ecology, we use our resources to protect variety: we protect the potential of what we do not yet know. One crucially important point is that design adds to our ways of thinking even if it does not depend on metricisation. If everything we can find in the Amazon is worth keeping, then every difference in the way we can think is worth keeping, too. We should fight really hard to preserve those different way of knowing, acting, thinking and doing which we call design. We have to hope there are ways other than those we are using now, since the ways we are using now frequently only make matters worse. Variety of resource, whether in the worlds of the physical or of thought, is crucial to our culture and our survival.

**On what designers do:**

What is it that we designers do? What and how should we research? A large part of design research has focussed on assessment. It tells us how designs perform, measuring the performance of objects. But this does not really help us—instead we need to know how to act to improve matters. There is a difference between assessing and assisting. We have too much research that is about assessing and too little that is about assisting—assisting designers to design better.

We need to begin to look carefully at what it is that we actually do—not what others think we should do, not what others want us to do, not what others misinterpret of what it is that we do do. Michael Polanyi (1966, born Polányi Mihály), for instance, during the 1950s and 60s writes about “tacit knowledge” and “personal

knowledge”: the sort of knowledge that is hidden, that we cannot explain or account for. Donald Schön (1983) insisted that there is a type of knowledge professionals have, different from the type of knowledge academics have, which helps professionals and practitioners maintain and improve themselves in their practice. He called this “reflective practice”—the business of doing reflection in action. “Reflection” has become an over-used buzz-word, but it is a good word, too: as well as its optical meaning, to reflect means to look deeper, which is Schön’s sense of the word.

We should consider designing as something that is worthy of relevant research. But forcing designing into the engineers’ model of research—seeking “knowledge of”—means we risk losing our search for “knowledge for”. We need to design and use ways of researching that are helpful to design—a designerly research.

### On circularity:

Babies learn through acting, by touching. It is acting, doing, that leads us to our initial understandings. Through understanding we change the way we act. Studying and doing—they become united. Makers are inevitably caught up in the world where doing is on an equal level with understanding. Doing shapes understanding as much as understanding shapes doing. Design is a circular process where doing and understanding fit together—understanding is not superior but is fed back to doing. That is how we research. We keep testing out our ideas. We become more effective as designers when we can exploit that circularity.

The industrial designer, Bruno Munari, told us: “Progress means simplifying, not complicating.”

### On doing design research:

What we do—design—is our practice. What we need to do is to consider how our practice can be made better. What do I mean by better? What happens when we go through design practice research? We become our own critics, we learn to understand the context (influence of others), we learn to transcend ourselves to reach places where it is possible to practice better. There is a type of novelty that may be obscured, showing us the importance of such transcendence.\* The novelty, in this case, lies in coming to understand our own practice through crossing boundaries through reflecting—while also in revealing precedence, giving us evidence of viable paths of influence or analogies between what is already known and what comes from somewhere else.

### In conclusion:

Practice is an approach to being in the world, to how we act and what we do in it. Taking practice seriously brings with it the testing approach of a researcher. There are people who see practice as theory—particularly among artists, for instance, when they merely illustrate a theoretical position through some project. But it is vital to find ways in which acting and understanding are brought together all the time, to feed into one another for a synergetic outcome that is greater than any individual component. Christopher Fraying talked of research for art, research into art, research through art, and we may substitute the word design for the word art (well, he was rector of the Royal College of Art, a major art and design school): research into, for and through design—there are many (other) valuable prepositions that can also be used.

What do we achieve? A transformation of belief in what we can do and what we may expect from others: rigour, consistency, connectedness. This way of doing research is legitimate, challenging, and credible. I wish you all courage to complement, to expand and extend what you do and what you know as an architect. If this cannot be called research, so much the worse for research.

### Excerpts from wrap-up discussion:

The design practice research is not about acquiring a qualification but it is about a venturesome journey into greater learning. Becoming more aware of your practice does not make one a poorer practitioner. A PhD does not do what you want, it will accommodate what you want. Architecture is a discipline—a PhD is a different kind of discipline. From my own experience, the PhD enabled me to be freer in my thought, to do more, to think more imaginatively.

### Does a PhD make one a better architect?

What is a better architect. A better human being. Thus, yes, hopefully the design practice research model for a PhD process will contribute to that.

*\* Transcendent: exceeding usual limits; extending or lying beyond the limits of ordinary experience; in Kantian philosophy: being beyond the limits of all possible experience and knowledge; being beyond comprehension. The Oxford Dictionary gives: ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French transcendre or Latin transcendere, from trans- ‘across’ + scandere ‘climb’.*

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## 5.7 A modest challenge

*Karli Luik*

This paper is a foray into my architectural practice following its past endeavours, understanding its present condition and tracing its future. In my work the creativity is always bound strictly to different contexts and has subversive political aspirations. I outline the tactics of modest challenge as a key component in my practice. It is tactics that has the ability to inflict some amount of positive unease to the people inhabiting the space. While presenting six realized designs I discuss and define three more specific tactical design tools I tend to use: the personal ‘body politics’, narrative and metaphor as architectural tools and contextual site-engineering.

Most probably there is no architecture whatsoever that could be considered completely apolitical.<sup>108</sup> Politics is always there — any space is acting at some level to organise your behaviour. It guides you around, it hides you away or puts you on a pedestal. It makes you being observed or decides what you are being showed. It affects the way you cook your food at home, how you walk the city street. Hence this kind of politics is omnipresent, only the amount and visibility of its existence varies. I would like to argue that a possible distinction can be made considering the ambition of the built environment — whether the architects understands the building’s political being and makes the way it performs somehow visible, or whether it is just a silent tool perhaps depicting itself as a functional container, or even trying to establish itself as an ambitious sovereign creation of free creative mind, addressing general form rather than people and their presence in space.

Thus a very general division can be made between buildings that hide away their political agenda and the other ones that try to consciously make visible or even challenge the disciplinary forces that inform them. Within this distinction it seems to me that I can establish politicality as a property of design, a quality I can address with my designs. I do not see it as a universal framework for classification of built environment — this would not be needed, it would be definitely too vague and imprecise. Rather it is a personal design framework that avoids focusing on aesthetics and puts

<sup>108</sup> In this text I understand the notion of politics in the perspective as articulated by Michel Foucault, seeing the politics as set of tools creating the disciplinary society we live in.



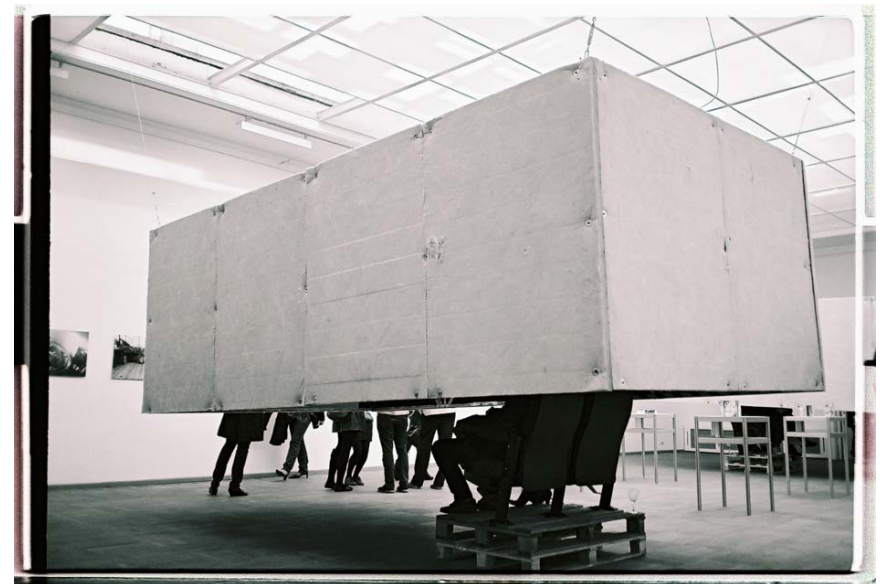
less emphasis to the direct reference and connection to the today's over-addressed topic of ethics.

In this framework of politicality I seem to have developed the concept of modest challenge as a central design tool in my practice. It is about being conscious of the impact of seemingly neutral spatial disciplinary strategies, trying to contest the obvious while understanding the limited agency of architectural creation as a tool to change the society. The modest challenge is there to create awareness of the specific space, a hopefully pleasant sensation of being somewhere. It shall make you curious, it should fulfil you with a small amount of positive unease. I would like to argue that this is the way a space can deviate from the *foucauldian* path of discipline and punish towards the passage of deviation and happiness. Modest challenge is neither a riot nor a revolution. Maybe it could be seen as an unauthorised peaceful and pretty silent gathering, a self erected traffic barrier or a zebra crossing sprayed on the asphalt during the night.

#### 5.7.1 Operation Kontekst<sup>109</sup>

Probably there is nothing more important in architecture than context — only context is giving buildings their power. Accordingly, the creation of positive unease is always site-specific and context-dependent. The strategy is, not surprisingly, every time specifically created based on the surroundings and the questions that arise in this very specific environment. I think the 'strategy of modest challenge' is more discernible and better visible in my installations, art objects and exhibition designs as these projects are more experimental, they do not need to address the building code or other normative documents, they are usually temporary and they are there to make their point as simple and clear as possible. In the following section I present six examples: the first three installations following three architectural works that do highlight the most relevant strategies of the 'modest challenge' I have been using for the creation of the positive unease — the personal 'body politics', narrative and metaphor as architectural tools and contextual site-engineering.

*Figure 5.19  
Hanging video  
boxes for the  
"Untold Stories"  
exhibition.  
photo: Vahur  
Puik*



<sup>109</sup> Kontekst is my office created in 2014. From 2004 until splitting the office in 2014 I was partner of Salto architects ([www.salto.ee](http://www.salto.ee)). Most of the work presented stems from this time and is achieved with my former partners Maarja Kask and Ralf Lõoke if not stated otherwise.

### 5.7.2 Stories left untold

The modest challenge creating the positive unease was in its purest form put on display with the creation of the exhibition design for the “Untold stories” exhibition in 2011 in Tallinn Art Hall. The main topic of the exhibition was articulating the voice of LGBT community. Focusing on short films as the main media the show was telling stories about managing various forms of sexualities that are often treated with disgust and hatred by “normal” people. That is why these stories are usually hidden away and left untold, especially in Estonia that is, regarding this topic — albeit its overall innovative image —, a common homophobic post-soviet state.

The proposed design was extremely simple, consisting only of small boxes hanging from the ceiling with two raised cinema seats installed inside each box. Boxes were rough, made of insulation material to create an environment with good acoustics creating just a nice half-separated environment inside the art hall, a comfortable place for leaning back and enjoying the movies. The most important topics I addressed were the possibility of (de)formation of identity by spatial means and the general possibility of creating solid borders in social contexts. It was about disturbing the borderline between the inside and the outside. It was very easy to ‘cross the border’ at the exhibition — you just had to bow down for a second and enter a completely different environment slipping from the wide white cube into a dark and intimate space. Still, you were there not entirely — as the box was lifted from the floor, open below, leaving the bottom half of your body vulnerably visible for anyone outside the ‘closet’, pushing people out of their comfort zone, creating the ‘positive unease’ and conscious awareness of your very presence and own identity.

For me it is in a way almost too literal carnation of Foucault’s worldview. In his book “Discipline and Punish” he examines the practices of discipline and training associated with disciplinary power. He points out that these practices were first cultivated in isolated institutional settings such as prisons, military establishments, hospitals, factories and schools but were gradually applied more broadly as techniques of social regulation and control. The most important feature of disciplinary power is that it is exercised directly on the body. Disciplinary practices subject bodily activities to a process of constant surveillance and examination that enables a continuous and pervasive control of individual conduct. The aim of these practices is to simultaneously optimise the body’s capacities, skills and productivity and to foster its usefulness and docility: “What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act on

the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it /... / Thus, discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, “docile bodies.”<sup>110</sup> But it is not only the body that these disciplinary techniques target. Foucault presents disciplinary power as productive of certain types of subject as well. Later on in his book he describes the way, which is described by Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon, in which the central technique of disciplinary power — the constant surveillance — which is initially directed toward disciplining the body, takes hold of the mind as well to produce a psychological state of “conscious and permanent visibility.”<sup>111</sup> Accordingly, individuals internalise this perpetual surveillance and through it they produce the kind of self-awareness that defines the modern subject.

Thus in the case of “Untold stories”, the design in its simplicity addressed the questions of how has your subjectivity developed to your current state and what is your personal relation to the diverse practices of today’s society, it tried to foster the self-awareness of the spectators and combined with the art works exhibited it called for an extremely intimate and emphatic experience.

Another personally important strategy here is the process of articulating a metaphor spatially. As “coming out of the closet” is obviously a widespread and universally understood metaphor, so creating its spatial reference could be seen a very postmodern strategy in the way of building the exhibition, a maybe too obvious and even disturbingly literal reference for some taste. Still, it is deliberately postmodern, where “postmodernism’s real qualities are mean, sarcastic, blank, difficult, challenging, yet somehow simultaneously psychedelically positive”,<sup>112</sup> as Sam Jacob recently stated. I see it as another modest challenge, working on the borderline of space and language. I do agree with his definition, where the postmodernism’s core is the floating signifier, the notion of the sign detached from the thing it once referred so that it no longer points to a clear, agreed upon meaning. It is not translating language into space. I rather see it as a quality of spatial material to be able to form metaphors that are thickened to narratives in people’s minds.

110 Michel Foucault, “Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison.” 1979, New York: Vintage Books., 138-9

111 *ibid*, 201

112 Sam Jacob on the prospect of a Postmodernism revival, <http://www.dezeen.com/2015/08/13/sam-jacob-opinion-postmodernism-revival-we-are-all-postmodern-now/>

### 5.7.3 Addictions, and noticing them

As stated in the beginning, deviation from the normative could be one strategy for creating the modest challenge. This is the basis of the methodology I would call “contextual site engineering” — a methodology we have been using over and over again. Only being very aware about the specific context allows producing a coherent and meaningful deviation. So this way of thought is starting with the very close look and analysis on site, finding and separating elements available for architectural treatment and a deviation. It can be a subtle change of a common everyday object found in the particular context that in the particular context does redefine itself and gain new meaning.

One example of this kind of way of thought is the proposal for the memorial for addicts in the centre of Tallinn where the design consists just of a redesigned manhole. Creating this kind of strangely addressed memorial in the first place was an initiative by a rather populist politician running an anti-casino campaign. Thus, the chosen site is located just next to the headquarters of the biggest Estonian casino-chain. It is the place where they used to have protest demonstration against casinos. Before the competition there was circulating a rumour that they actually already a plan for a bronze sculpture depicting a casino addict chasing her wife with an axe and they need the competition only to legitimise the chosen design — a sculpture that would probably have been a lot better visible and publicly much easily understood. So it was a surprise to win the competition, as our proposal was definitely not a memorial that could have normally been expected. Instead of a “proper” artwork it is rather a weird piece of infrastructure, a strange manhole with a shape of a human being. Nevertheless as the design is not really “outstanding” in the very literal meaning of the word it is still waiting for the funds.

As in the case of untold stories here again the flow of material is brought to a metaphoric level. The rainwater entering the manhole works similarly to the visitor in untold stories where she was going spatially through a series of entering and exiting cupboards — a spatial element is gaining a narrative nature through its contextual setting. From being purely functional objects, the narrative nature transforms them into specific manifestations with minimal or no aesthetic ambitions. The aesthetics has been minimised in order the narrative nature could arise and dominate.

Same strategy of translating the ordinary actions into poetic narratives is one I have been using extensively also with architectural projects. It is important to repeat and emphasise that what we



*Figure 5.20  
Memorial  
“Notice the  
Addiction”*



deal here with is not only the manhole. The shape of the manhole is not the most substantial part of the sculpture, it is rather a reference point, a central figure that directs towards the narrative that is the actual monument. What I do address with this 'statue' is an action that is already there, already happening — that is the flow of slop that is dripping down through the gutter anyway. The real instance we are dealing with is not a static piece of metal but an undergoing action. The manhole is a piece of poetic infrastructure that translates the flow of wastewater into a sequence of life. A common piece of infrastructure has been reverted to being a sign — it is a signifier in the first place and its main function of being a gutter allows the sign to be easily understandable for everybody.

#### 5.7.4 Being fast and slow

Mixing messing with infrastructure, artistic intervention, critical awareness and political agenda in a Russian forest led to the creation of the "Fast track", an installation that tries another way for disturbing identities. It was part of the Archstoyanie festival happening yearly in scenic countryside 300 km outside of Moscow. It is a festival dedicated to land art where every year they build few more and dismantle some of the old artworks, the festival area gradually forming a semi-natural sculpture park. The event attracts thousands of people to come over for a weekend in July and enjoy discovering the installations, most of which are diverse pavilions or various kinds of spatial erections. So by default these works rely on the conflict, where the erections manifest contrasting against the surrounding nature, deforming violently the natural context, be the pavilion as sensitive and sincere as possible.

Thus, we proposed avoiding the conflict that would allow creating a contextual and subtle intervention as our task. We concentrated on the natural behaviour in a forest — movement —, something that is common to all species inhabiting the area, including human beings. Recurring and frequent movement produces natural paths, so rebuilding one of them allowed us a subtle contextual intervention that produced very personal physical impact to the visitors. Our creation was the world longest trampoline — a new and different kind of pathway inside the forest. One of the intentions was to give new means to people to enjoy the environment, to jump higher and move faster, so they could experience how some wild animal could feel while moving around in the same environment. Even though it was widely published in the media as a prototype for a pedestrian road for the future, a new invention for faster movement, our intention was diametrically different. Instead of praising

*Figure 5.21  
Installation  
"Fast Track"  
in Nikola-  
Lenivets,  
Russia. photo:  
Karli Luik*





technological innovation, it aimed to the process of being present there in this particular forest, demanding an unexpected control of your body and a more aware and connected being in the very specific environment. By temporarily speeding up the movement, we actually aimed for a slow, informed and critical presence.

### 5.7.5 Defining borders

Accordingly, thinking about different kind of borders and borderlines is frequently present in my projects. As presented with the project of untold stories, the creation of a physical border is an architectural statement that assesses the viability of the concept itself outside strictly architectural realm, in a broader cultural or social context. In this project the border is present both physically and metaphorically with the almost same intensity. I would argue that praising its presence within the irreconcilable discrepancy of both the built world and language, it tries to undermine its own existence. Showing off in the two realms at the same time allows somehow escaping from the real world, being somewhere in-between, not entirely here. It provides metaphor as an answer to a question that was never asked. One could argue, that this kind of built environment then is there more of its own sake, pretentious and arrogant. That it defines itself as being completely artificial and maybe even superfluous and excessive. It is both cynical, sarcastic but still honest, modestly challenging and weirdly positive in its own way at the same time.

A more architectural example of a strict borderline is the design for the open areas of the Estonian Road Museum. Similarly to the “Fast Track”, it is a project built in a scenic natural environment, a place you would rather not disturb. A museum of roads is obviously not only about roads, but it is more about social, economic and cultural issues connected to the history of roads. So the roads are presented there together with their specific surrounding environments, artefacts and cultural background that constituted the specific landscapes. The main question was how to represent different landscapes in a landscape, how to differentiate what is in fact actually there and what is fiction — the represented landscape. The proposed solution was the creation of a strong borderline: by burying the museum somewhat in the ground, drawing a strict line made of concrete separating the real and the presented, the natural and fictional. It is a 3-dimensional line with differing in height between 10 cm and 4 meters, that did change according to the slope of the original landscape and the needs of the exhibits.

The strictly separated identities — the real and the represented

*Figure 5.22*  
*Estonian Road*  
*Museum.*  
*Photo: Karli*  
*Luik*



— rely on each other. What is represented relies on beautiful surroundings, and the scar in the landscape that the museum has made also magnifies the beauty of the ‘original landscape’. The borderline only highlights the impossibility of any strict separation. It forms a simple frame where the inside and outside are tangible with the same strength.

Also the borderline of the museum has a dual identity similar to untold stories – it has a strong metaphoric presence. As a continuous cut in the landscape it has a simultaneous reference of the main aspect of what a road does — separates and connects at the same time. It forms a scar, a deep wound in the picturesque landscape. In the wound there is something that is strictly from another environment, something seemingly painful and irreversible. The inside never touches the real world; it is a completely fake environment that is highlighted with a plastic palm-tree in the centre of a roundabout in the recreational area.

#### 5.7.6 Stories and fiction

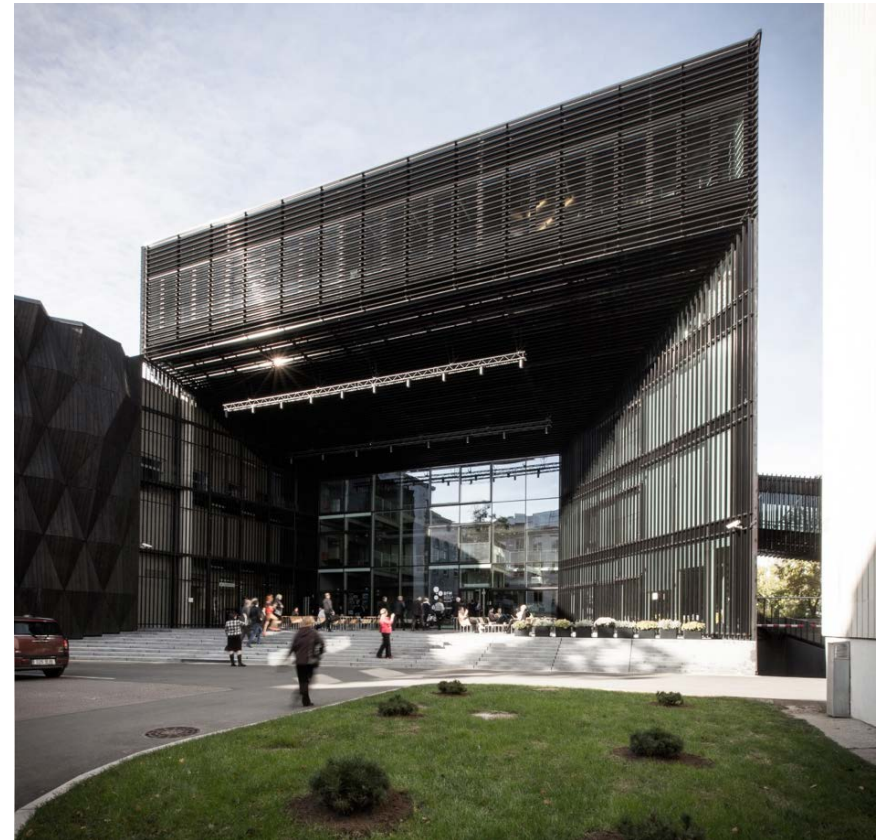
Working on the junction of space and language might also need a psychoanalytic perspective. I feel that the frequent usage of metaphors has also an inherent shamefulness accompanying it. Maybe I have been told that architecture shall be serious and primarily spatial discipline. In contrast, I see my design process as first finding the metaphors, forming narratives and then hiding them away into architecture. It is like a childhood trauma that forms your thoughts and behaviour from the unconscious, tries to come to the surface but is forced underneath again.

So I think my partners, and me we have been looking for narratives constantly, though we never wanted to tell a story by making architecture. The narratives we have been looking for or which we have chosen are finally hidden behind their spatial qualities, they try to exhibit their potential to create habitable and meaningful space.

For example, the building of Baltic Film and Media school is composed, strictly speaking, only of a stage that stands in the centre of the small and dense campus of Tallinn University. The main quality of the building is actually a void in the building mass redefining the hole courtyard. A courtyard that was previously only governed by cars and the 10.000 students had no comfortable outdoor place anywhere on campus.

In a way the stage we created here is only a metaphor, as it is hardly really used as a real stage but rather as cafe terrace and the main entrance to the building. It is a fictional and narrative

*Figure 5.23  
Baltic Film and  
Media School.  
Photo: Karli  
Luik*





way of making architecture, imposing building functions that are never properly used. Yet the qualities emerging from this fiction are useful for random everyday use of the building. For instance, the cantilever that holds the cinema and public space above the 'stage' in fact creates passive shade for the glazed entrance lobby that is forming the beginning of the backstage. And the building mass forming the side stages creates a perfect terrace in Estonian climatic conditions — a place protected from wind where warm-absorbing black colour facade towards south is extending the summer, so that the outdoors can be enjoyed also during spring and autumn when students are extensively present in the university buildings.

### 5.7.7 Bodily sensations

Modest challenge accompanied with the focus on bodily experience of users is best highlighted with the building of NO99 Straw Theatre. This temporary theatre hall was built only for five months in 2011 when Tallinn was the Cultural Capital of Europe. It is a cheap blackbox installed next to Tallinn Old town, in an area that used to be a restricted recreational area for the Soviet navy, with a wooden summer theatre and a park. The soviet troops left and the theatre burned down, thus the area had been a neglected and shabby spot for the last twenty years. Our strategy was to use the existing qualities, so we 'recycled' the old stairs that ascend the bastion and covered it with a roof that formed the entrance lobby together with a cafe and a small library. Most important was the material, as we were able to use uncovered straw for the theatre, since temporary buildings do not need to last. Straw is a material that creates memorable sensations and allows the visitor to use the senses which are normally not used for experiencing architecture: smelling and touching. The straw walls were inviting to just touch or to lean onto, and to let it to trickle your back. The moisture stayed in the walls, so you had a constant smelling sensation similar to the haylofts in the countryside where a lot of Estonians were used to sleep during summers. It also highlighted the notion of time and temporality, as the building started to grow different plants and mushrooms on it. Straw theatre was challenging architecture as something solid, cold and primarily visual. Focus on material and the existing qualities of the site could also be seen as a feminist practice of architecture, challenging the domination of visual image and focusing on other senses and personal contact with the building. It tried to be intimate and soft, a beautiful and slow poem that you listen with your eyes closed.

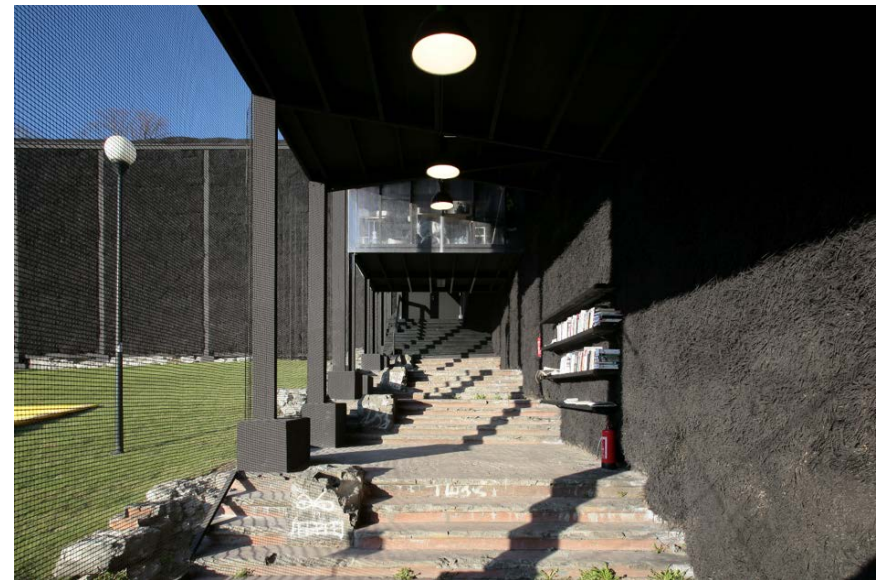
*Figure 5.24  
Young  
mushroom on  
the wall of  
NO99 Straw  
theatre. photo:  
Karli Luik*



### 5.7.8 Towards next operations

I this paper I presented my designs in the framework of politicality — it is a broad question of the possible agency of architecture in society in general. It is situated within the understanding of limited impact of architecture, defining a ‘modest challenge’ as its tool with the ability to create a feeling of positive unease. The positive unease is a state of mind I would like to impose to the users of the spaces I have created. At the same time it is my own feeling while designing these spaces. I would describe it ideally as a deep understanding of the design not completely fitting together, an intended and precisely moderated imperfection as the ultimate goal.

*Figure 5.25  
Covered and  
reused entrance  
hall of the  
NO99 Straw  
theatre. photo:  
Martin Siplane*





# Chapter 6 Public behaviours as triggers to creative practice research: As seen through three different lenses

*Tadeja Zupančič, Eli Hatleskog,  
Gitte Juul*

## 6.1 Introduction

*Tadeja Zupančič, Eli Hatleskog,  
Gitte Juul*

This chapter will look at creative triggers that come from public behaviours in creative practice research from three different points of view. These views come from a supervisor, a researcher and a PhD candidate all based at the University of Ljubljana as part of ADAPT-r ITN. The three different lenses aim to triangulate around the issue of creative triggers with regard to: strategy, theory and action.

The first lens through which triggers will be considered is that of Tadeja Zupančič, a supervisor who will look at the Initial Training Network (ITN) ADAPT-r (Architecture, Design and Art Practice Training-research) strategically. She will discuss: regional research traditions, cultural differences, communication and the role of practice in research. This will be followed by a description of relational knowledge and means of translating and/or explicating knowledge through creative practice research with regard to some examples from the ADAPT-r project. This will then lead into a discussion relating to differences in understanding, culture and traditions and how these can both trigger and influence research. The notion of culture and traditions related, in turn, to group dynamics, common identities and understandings and examples from both ADAPT-r and beyond, which demonstrate how community or context can trigger creativity and show that creative triggers can be both personal and common.

The second lens through which creative triggers will be considered is that of Eli Hatleskog, an experienced researcher with a 12-month fellowship at the University of Ljubljana. Her aim is to look across the ADAPT-r network. This point of view is tactical. It provides a discussion relating to the relevance of creative practice research, its intensions and outcomes, before suggesting that a modernist mind-set, relating to the idea of a sole creative genius, has been replaced by an understanding of multiple and socially constructed knowledge(s). This suggests that creativity today is social and triggered by common values. Furthermore, considering creative triggers as social leads us to concerns relating to the ethic and responsibilities of every creative practice researcher.

This second lens is then complimented by a third, that of Gitte Juul. She is an early stage research fellow with a 10-month fellowship at the University of Ljubljana. She puts concerns relating to the ethic and responsibilities of creative practice researcher into action through her nomadic model of practice.

In her section of the chapter, Juul discusses the role of society and the purposes and uses of space, before proposing that we move beyond representation toward action. Through her practice we are shown how she engages with society and are given insight into her concerns regarding unpredictability, value, the state and the purpose of architecture.

From these discussions, Juul describes how she sees her role change with regard to the community she is working with and her personal intentions, this leads to her description of four different roles that she might take when doing creative practice research.

These different roles then lead into Zupančič's concluding discussions of character traits as creative triggers in research, suggesting that the stance or attitude that a creative practice researcher chooses to take can also be a trigger to creativity.

## 6.2 Creative triggers that come from ‘public behaviours’ in creative practice research: A strategic view of Creative Practice Research

*Tadeja Zupančič*

The following reflections are based on some of my own personal experiences from observations and discussions as a panellist at Practice Research Conferences (PRS) in Ghent and Barcelona within the ADAPT-r project (2015), including the preparatory years of attending the Graduate Research Conferences (GRC) in Ghent, and as an examiner and/or supervisor of the PhD candidates at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture. My current ADAPT-r related actions are split in-between several roles:

As supervisor of Gitte Juul, Federico del Vecchio and Eli Hatleskog, the ADAPT-r fellows based in Ljubljana, the first two at the PhD level and the last at the postdoctoral level; where my attempts are directed to contextualize the reflective actions and cross-views emerging from the project itself directly.

- As leader of researchers at the faculty level, where I'm trying to identify the disciplinary relevance in architecture.
- And, as a member of the PhD commission at the university level, where I'm faced with people from 23 faculties and 3 academies, from biomedicine to music, from mechanical engineering to sociology.

I would like to focus on people as triggers of creativity in this chapter, since I am interested in creativity, triggered through the:

- Investigation of the practitioner's community of practice and public behaviours.
- Intensified discourse during the PhD symposia (PRS).
- PhD supervision actions, from the supervisor's point of view – including panel criticism, evaluation of PhD proposals.

In my opinion, PhD supervisors' positions are defined by:

*Figure 6.1 The view, shared by Gitte, Federico, Eli and myself, from our office in Ljubljana. Gitte started her PRS presentations with the explanation of the reflection of her creative practice through this view.*



*Figure 6.2 Framing the view: people from the ADAPT-r project and from different faculties of the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture, at the working exhibition by Gitte Juul and the students ('action' view with Peter Gabrijelcic, the Dean); Eli Hatleskog ('tactical' view) – ADAPT-r days in Ljubljana 11/6/2015, after the 'strategic' view round-table)*





- ‘Duties’ to challenge, to trigger creative practitioners.
- His/her academic ‘mission’: to promote research quality, regardless to the research approach, methods, dissemination mode.
- To support to candidates in their attempts to identify relevance of their research and not simply to ask the right/wrong questions.
- To shift his/her own role from leadership to mediation/ mirroring/changing lens/creative triggering.

The discussion, which follows, derives from activities within the ADAPT-r project. It addresses the question of how to enhance the process of the tacit knowledge explication from the creative practice research, and potentially, triggering the creation of additional knowledge. This chapter builds on recent discussions about what design research through practice is (from Polanyi, 1966, to Schön, 1983, from Österle and Otto, 2010, to Koskinen et.al., 2011, from Kocatürk and Mejdoub, 2011, to van Schaik and Johnson, 2011) and on feedback received after a presentation of the initial ideas at the first ADAPT-r conference (Zupančič, 2014).

These thoughts represent my own personal view of creative practice research. Acting as a PhD and post-PhD supervisor, with more than two decades of academic research and research organization experience in Ljubljana, Slovenia and abroad has challenged me to ask many questions relating to research motivation and creativity. During the last decade, while I’ve been leading the PhD programme in architecture, I have been driven by the desire to identify the local/regional PhD tradition and to position this tradition in relation to other contemporary research flows (T. Zupančič, 2009, 2012, 2014; J. Verbeke and T. Zupančič, 2014). As an architect I belong to an academic group of practitioners, faced with and triggered by a perceived institutional divide within the discipline and among other disciplines. When I started my professional carrier I identified a duality: on one side clear artistic/aesthetic orientation, and on the other the positivistic sciences. In short: counting design awards versus counting articles and citations. At that time, however, it was still possible to combine the rules according to one’s preferred professional orientation.

A couple of years later, I was advised to focus on one direction only and become ‘excellent’ in that. My choice was so-called ‘research’. As a consequence I now explore the core of architectural design(-ing). I do this with and ‘through’ students, both as design simulations and in the field work with actual communities. My

personal creative practice is recognized as ‘research’ in the local/regional context. Architecture is, nevertheless, in my understanding, a wide problem area, where many aspects and approaches meet. Both creative practice based and creative practice oriented are relevant for us. This includes theoretic inquiries combined with explorations through design. Technical laboratory tests or social science oriented field research with people are also not excluded, as long as they are relevant to research investigations. It is for this reason that in the PhD programme, I am, metaphorically speaking, trying to open as many ‘windows’ as possible. In an attempt to include practice based research, without excluding other approaches and as such allowing the stepping ‘in’ and ‘out’ if/when relevant; using hybrid methods, as long as it is relevant for the discipline in the chosen cultural context. This is where the question of contextual relevance comes from.

Not all options are currently acceptable at the institutional level. It can be argued that a part of the community will always ‘stays outside’, but the situation for the creative practices is changing rapidly. Proof of this can be seen in new rules for the academic promotion: though the double system of rules still exist, it is now possible to combine them across disciplines, where this combination is relevant (in all the disciplines, included in the ADAPT-r project, for instance).

The need to support ‘my’ candidates, especially at the PhD level, regardless of what they do, stimulates me to rediscover research approaches and methods again and again. After all, I need to know what bonds art researchers together, what stimulates creative practitioners. Essentially, I need to know how to reach and rediscover the core of the discipline, without forgetting the context. I consider myself to be not only a panel member and a reviewer, but also a fighter for innovation in research, in spite of claims that innovation is the key aim of any ‘true’ research.

Communicating the relevance of what we all do, and its impact for the wider research community are important regardless of the scale of the research community we identify with, though a critical mass of people ‘belonging together’ helps. Even although ‘outsiders’ are welcome in the PRS panels to offer the view ‘from outside’, in the process of joining the ADAPT-r project consortium it was necessary for me to understand the context as much as possible, and to contribute to the developments. As a researcher and PhD training manager, my desire to protect the research freedom at ‘my own’ institution made me to think about the hybridity of research methods in architecture. I did this largely from the perspective



of ‘excursions’ from/to theory and history, from/to technological inquiries, from/to research by design (Verbeke, 2013). And with an understanding that when the focus/essence is recognised as practice based, it can contribute to the field regardless to the side stories behind/beyond the research training endeavours. The reference to the importance and relevance of singularity (Stamm, 2009) sounded promising to me.

The development of doctoral scholarship in architecture, has revealed three types of approach: ‘conservative’, ‘pragmatic’ and ‘liberal’ (Gillies, cited from Källemark and interpreted by Dunin-Woyseth, 2005: 85, 86, 99). I have already argued that the integration of all the three ‘perspectives’ is possible even within the ‘conservative’ complex larger institutional contexts (Zupančič, 2009).

In architecture, at the faculty level, we have never developed creative practice based research exclusively, but many characteristics are present and can be traced in the integral doctoral scholarship tradition and within the hybrid methods developed. Nevertheless, creative practice research has predominated in specific cases. The integral doctoral scholarship tradition in Ljubljana is closely related to the fact that the majority of the candidates come from practice, and the majority do not stop practicing in order to do their PhD. However, the ‘four main disciplinary approaches within architecture (building science, social science, humanities and art/design)’ (Rendell, 2004) have always tended to become polarized into being either ‘artistic’ or ‘scientific’: the first pole composed by art/design and humanities (Čeferin, 2003); the second one linking building and social sciences into the ‘scientific’ point of view (Zupančič, 1995). The dynamic relation between design/design studio/practice and research, regardless to its definition, is the essence of the school’s tradition. (Blenkuš 2003, Hudnik 2003, Bugarič 2006, Juvančič 2008; the list of finished PhD-s since 1960 is available here: ‘Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za arhitekturo’, Finished PhD research, 2015). From this perspective the EAAE declaration of research looks ‘natural’ (EAAE, 2015).

The majority of the PhD candidates in architecture in Ljubljana are practitioners, trying to cross their boundaries of understanding their own and other practices, filling the gaps of their professional practices, wishing to reflect on, within and for their own work. Some of them are able to look beyond their own design approaches (Batista, 2001). Recognized as ‘venturous’ or not, they are willing to upgrade their knowledge and understanding level. They report their changing attitude to their own way of designing during and after the process of their PhD research training. This is a sign

that some of the most important elements and characteristics of a practice based PhD ‘model’ are inherent in their process. However, the doctoral candidates are not always aware of this, this may be because they are not focused on a specific approach but rather on the contents of their research. And, in many cases, practice based research is one but not the only approach which can be identified in their research. A shift from theory or back to theory or technology is up to the individuality of their research freedom and the relevance of their contextualisation. In some cases, strong parallels, developed equally, can be identified, such as a combination of practice based research and research through design. As such, the ADAPT-r project/programme challenges me to both to identify commonalities within the consortium, with regard to the singularity of the approach at Ljubljana and look at its potential relevance to other institutions.

When ADAPT-r early stage researchers join us, the approach ‘sounds somehow familiar’ and also relevant to many people; and represents a potentially refreshing wider community of relevance. The work of the experienced researchers can be identified in the intersection of sociological endeavours and the methodological development in architecture and related fields. Especially in the case of Eli Hatleskog, based in Ljubljana, responsible for the investigation of ‘public behaviours’.

### **Cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary creative triggers: ‘Strategic’ in relation to ‘tactical’ and ‘action’ views**

The ‘strategic’ view of creative triggers in creative practice research is not about looking across creative practice research, as described by Eli Hatleskog later in this book, but it is about the positioning of creative practice research in relation to other (potential) contexts of relevance. If the ‘tactical’ view, described by Eli, the one across the creative practice research, focuses on the most direct disciplinary and supra-disciplinary context of relevance, that is the creative practice itself, the ‘strategic’ looks beyond any disciplinary boundaries.

What are the limits of those endeavours? What defines and redefines/breaks them? Some of the limitations can be found in the level of familiarity with the topic, the socio-spatial context related roots, communication language, curiosity and adaptability of people; inclusiveness/exclusivism of communities.

### Relational knowledge and knowledge translation

If the 'tactical' view of creative practice research allows and encourages creative practitioners, including creative practice researchers, to use and develop their own modes of communication, the 'strategic' identifies a clear need to translate this knowledge to people outside creative practice/research. The internal language is translated into a mode of communication, which can be used externally. Through this, a new type of relational knowledge emerges in translation and communication.

In order to understand the knowledge can be derived from this type of translation, the interpretations of 'lab', 'field' and 'showroom' approaches in design research through practice are useful starting point (Koskinen etc, 2011). It is possible to develop a concept of explicit and tacit knowledge transfer in these three modes:

1. The '*lab*' approach is arranged in isolated simulations, where explicit knowledge predominates. The need to transfer this type of knowledge to its tacit mode is perhaps not obvious, but it helps in the development of new theories and methods.
2. The '*field*' context can be seen as reality-based knowledge and interpretation, its complexity required a high level of tacit knowledge transfer.
3. The '*showroom*' is rich with tacit knowledge and requires researchers' engagement for its transfer to explicit knowledge – recognizable for other research fields.

Crossing the boundaries of tacit knowing in 'field' and 'showroom' research approaches and crossing the boundaries of explicit knowledge and understanding in both 'lab' and 'field' research contexts can help architectural design researchers in the process of seeking the dynamic balance of explicit and tacit knowledge (transfer), enhancing the level of their research (self-)confidence and excellence recognition.

Practice based research relates largely to what is called 'field', while research through design is closer to the 'lab' approach (with its 'theoretical projects' – Johnson, 2011). However, at least in architecture it can be argued that practice based research offers a nice opportunity of combining both: 'field'-related and 'lab' projects can represent more or less balanced alternatives while exploring the same question. The level of predictability of their circumstances is the key difference between the two modes ('lab' is much more predictable...). The origins of 'knowledge for' (Glanville, 2005) design

creation can be found in this interplay. It develops two parallel knowledge levels, which require final synthesis for further transfer.

The 'showroom' approach is more than a (more or less balanced) combination of the 'field' and 'lab' approaches. It represents the third, integrated combination of multiple research strategies. It develops simultaneous and continuously intertwined knowledge and knowledge transfer levels. Hypothetical designs in this case grow beyond the limited 'lab' options, as the complexity of reality is taken more seriously. This does not mean that specific questions do not require the 'lab' circumstances to be answered; but that an awareness of 'lab' isolation needs to be enhanced. It is also difficult to say that the 'lab' option in architecture corresponds to the 'traditional' notion of research ('research is research' – Dunin Woyseth, 2005).

The choice of research and the dissemination modes, and perhaps the combination of several modes, depends on the type of the creative practice research, the type of practice/research drivers/topic/questions, the researcher/s attitude and many other factors – no other research supervision plan can be made, other than a simple vision of the dynamic balance within the process, which is adaptable and responsive to new circumstances at any moment. Furthermore: the dialog within research fields 'outside' design requires continuous questioning regarding research modes and the ways of communicating. Any special focus on 'pure design' may mask the danger that architecture becomes. Identification of potential research modes and methods is essential; following one of them blindly is dangerous. Searching for a balance of approaches and methods in relation to the topic/questions/contexts in discourse is the key to a higher level of research excellence and its wider/more intensified relevance and recognition.

Personally, I focus on the issues of the relevance of research results, as they influence the way research results are communicated and the knowledge is actually 'produced'. Some of these issues derive from the disciplinary or cross-disciplinary research traditions. The detachment of space and time from the places of practical engagement in conversations doesn't mean we are detached from those places in our minds: our memories are situated and our diverse research traditions need to be taken into account.

The example of Rosanne van Klaveren, one of the ADAPT-r fellows (hosted by the Estonian Academy of Arts, Faculty of Architecture with her PhD institution in Belgium – KU Leuven) demonstrates an interdisciplinary battle in the process of creative practice research contextualisation in the research tradition of her

own doctoral school. She used a metaphor of ‘a wolf dressed in sheep’s clothing’ to illustrate her role in the fight. As an artist she was triggered by the anthropologists and other ‘traditionally’ oriented researchers. She was also triggered by a number of cultural contexts: the Nenets she worked with; the Estonians, as she was based at the Tallinn Art Academy as the ADAPT-r fellow; the Belgian atmosphere of her doctoral school.

The issue of knowledge translation is a multidimensional one. First of all it relates to the diversity of knowledge modes in different research areas. The explication of tacit knowledge characteristic to creative practice research can be viewed as a process of knowledge translation, which triggers creativity, including the discovery of new modes of knowledge representation. An example of this is the development of a specific visual language in the design-related creative practice research. Are we aware of all the communication layers in these developments? The assumption that visual language is universal doesn’t work. Similar things can be said about English as a ‘universal’ communication language. For example: the term research, while translated into Slovene, is too general; it needs to be specified; what many others name rigorous research, is called scientific research in Slovenia; regardless to the research field(-s) in which it takes place; while in many other contexts the meaning of scientific research is more narrow and its notion is related to the natural sciences and/or at least to the positivistic research approaches. At the ‘ADAPT-r days’ in Ljubljana in June 2015 (one of the project dissemination and local contextualization events), it was very clear that art when referred to by Johan Verbeke, the coordinator of ADAPT-r, relates to the research field, while in the context of Slovenia, it represents the highest level of excellence in artistic endeavours. The judgement in this case is focused to the aesthetic dimensions of the body of work. This might be close but not the same as the term *venturous* – form the ADAPT-r vocabulary.

### Cultural creative triggers

Why are these words not understood in the same way? Because all of these terms are cultural constructs, as such, they are understood differently in different contexts.

‘Venturous-ness’, as far as I understand it, is not necessarily directly linked to the artistic excellence of a creative practitioner; though the aesthetic dimension may influence the understanding of the research dimension beyond the (commercial) practice of the work discussed. What is the influence? How does it happen? It helps in or blocks the communication of the research dimensions.

For example: when I listened the interpretation of a series of creative practice PhD-s by some candidates who had already finished the RMIT programme at one of the PRS-s several years ago (called GRC-s at that time), I had a feeling that I understood one of them perfectly well; but I lost any sense of engagement to the other two.

As far as I remember, they were all from Australia and the context of their body of work was Australian. They used (from my point of view, English is not my primary language) ‘similar’ English as a communication language. But there were two main differences in their work. One was focused on the social dimensions of architecture, something which I am interested in. The other two were more formally oriented. It was difficult for me to identify the obsessions of those two practitioners. I liked the architectural results of the first one; probably because of the relative closeness to what I value as an aesthetic endeavour, influenced by my own local/regional contextual community values. The architecture of the other two seemed simply kitsch to me. Obviously it was too far from ‘my’ visual worlds, as such, I missed the research message entirely. When I discussed my problem with others, one of the answers was: ‘Some researchers are simply better than others’. I believe, that in their cultural context they were appreciated as creative practitioners, but still, they were less convincing as researchers; in my case the results of their creative practice blocked the message entirely. An awareness of this allowed me to ignore the aesthetic dimensions, at least partially, so that I was able to follow the research message of another creative practice researcher better. Several years later I observed that a similar thing happened to people entering a specific research community. The reaction to a presentation like: ‘This is what we do for the last thirty years, there is nothing new here; and this architecture is not at an artistic level’ demonstrates that problem. The initial ‘closeness and distance’ of the knowledge understanding may lead to ignorance, or may trigger the creativity within the relational knowledge creation.

A similar discussion can be continued about the word ‘creative’. In the Slovenian context, it is often linked to the notion of artistic excellence. This is the way it is understood in the supra-disciplinary context of art and design disciplines in Slovenia. However, to avoid misunderstanding in a much wider cultural context I cannot use this term this way.

It can be argued that any assumptions that others in our conversation understand what we want to communicate are questionable. Often it is possible to identify the way the message is understood from the public behaviour of the community. In other words: from

the reactions of the people involved in the communication.

The importance of the research traditions of the schools involved in the development of the relational knowledge in research seems crucial to me. For example, when discussing her community of practice I asked Gitte Juul about the influence of her school tradition on her actual creative practice. Initially she asserted that there was no influence. In further discussions she identified many other communities and people as referential and much more important. The tradition of the school nevertheless 'was' somewhere, implicitly at that moment. Then she started to work with students from Ljubljana. Among her first comments was about their reactions to her initiative. They made many excuses. The interpretations of their situation were produced in such a way that it fitted to their personal intentions, regardless to what they usually do in other cases at the faculty. It seemed as though they tried to create shortcuts to their educational results. Their reaction was obviously different than the behaviour of the students in Copenhagen, where Gitte usually taught and where she also finished her diploma. On top of that, the unpredictability of their way of thinking in the actual design process was higher than Gitte expected. This is, for me, the evidence that the influence of her educational tradition is much higher than she is aware of. Nevertheless, her ability to adapt and to develop trust in people helped to bridge the differences. The joint activity brought her a shortcut to some though not all deeper layers of the local/regional context, which is/was not familiar to her. She managed to develop a method, already begun in her other nomadic projects in Denmark and India, which helped her to cross the boundaries of socio-spatial/cultural distance. This is her battle against the web-based and imaging-oriented collaboration in the architectural or urban design projects, where the actual reality of life plays the key role in the process.

Reading her starting points for this book chapter proposal I realized that the creative practice research community plays an important if not the key role in her current investigations, however, in her writings this is not that obvious yet. Further clarity on this matter could help her to make her research relevant not only for creative practice researchers but for the wider context of the research community.

After her reading of the lines above some further clarifications have been made: 'For sure my school tradition and education influences my way of thinking and operation. I work with and against that influence'. From this perspective I can see her first answer about her school's tradition in a different way. Identifying other

influences as much more important doesn't necessarily mean you are not aware of your school's influence, it can also mean you are working against this influence. My further question then is about how exactly. 'My impression is that the students are focused on and used to come up with a solution – more than to explore the questions behind the problem.' This is what she has observed from the beginning of working with the selected group of the students from Ljubljana. As far I understand this, she worked with them to overcome their orientation to solutions and imaging. If this means working with her school's tradition, what is 'against' then?

### **ADAPT-r group identities and understandings**

When the words are written, and the community is virtual, the reactions of people are limited. Nevertheless, citations, for instance, indicate that the work is not ignored. That is probably why some research fields, at least those where explicit knowledge mode dominates and written words lead in the research dissemination absolutely, rely on citation counting systems. No wonder then that the reaction of some people from artistic disciplines leads to the new modes of exclusivism and ignorance. This attitude is welcome from one point of view: it develops the essence of the art disciplines. On the other hand it is dangerous: it develops new divides within the disciplines, which are more general than others; in architecture, landscape architecture, where the 'artistic'(aesthetic) dimension is intertwined with many others.

A revival of the historic divide between the beaux-art originated artistic tradition and the technology-oriented schools of architecture can be identified in this new dichotomy. At the school of architecture in Ljubljana the divide described is visible at the school itself as an essence of its own tradition from the foundation period on. This duality resulted in the already described research approach, that includes not only both views, but it is developed as an integral one, where the methods used are hybrid.

When the focus upon practice is too strong, ignorance of what is already known becomes a serious danger. Some signs of ignorance of architectural history and theory, for instance, can be identified. Critical regionalists have been clear about these things, for instance, but who refers to them? Relevance in architectural research, creative practice based or not, is almost never fully global. On the other hand, the relevance of singularity cannot be limited to one creative practice only. There are several layers of singularities in relation to others; these singularities are defined with the community 'families', identifiable from others.



The 'Irish group' in the ADAPT-r project, for example are nearly entirely self-sufficient. They build a barrier of complex English expressions around their research, allowing relevance for close similarities, which is only really understood by people familiar with the regional cultural context.

Then there are the group of 'newcomers', the set of 'singularities' searching for their own 'place'. These are people, some of whom are seeking similarities, and others, trying to prove their uniqueness (Gitte), identifying differences the first moment when others identify similarities.

### **ADAPT-r in relation to other creative practice streams**

What about the relevance of the singularity of different cultural contexts? The translation of knowledge from individual practices to the diverse contextual singularities is obviously more than the explication of the knowledge from within the practice and the new knowledge which 'happens' by chance in this process. What is relevant to be interchanged in-between Irish architects is perhaps not relevant for my colleagues and I, as I cannot fully follow the translation of their knowledge. So, although I like their architecture and thus also their visual language, I cannot get past the communication barrier.

In contrast to the Irish, Erietta Attali, a photographer, who talked in Barcelona about the Mediterranean way of understanding the world, explained it her own way. That was not solely about her practice. She contextualised her knowledge trans-regionally, since she is a global traveller.

The last creative practice research symposiums within the ADAPT-r context in Ghent and Barcelona (2015, 2016) showed that creative practice research is able to incorporate the diverse contextual research traditions. That means that this community of researchers needs to be able to look beyond the European historic divide between the art and technology oriented disciplinary flows in architecture. Perhaps the community is not fully aware, yet, of the richness, which can be brought to the development of relational knowledge and how specific creative practice research flows can transform its dynamic identity.

I would like to point a question by Sally Steward from the Glasgow School of Art directed to Irene Prieler, one of the ADAPT-r fellows from Austria, after her presentation at the last ADAPT-r PRS.

She asked, 'Where is your obsession for details coming from?' And I asked myself: 'Is this something that is not clear for Sally

or she simply wants to trigger Irene?' For me the answer was so obvious that I didn't even think of asking it. For me this obsession is somehow 'natural' for the people from the universities in Austria or Germany, especially from those developed to universities from the many technical institutes of higher-education (the former 'Hochschulen'). In short: this is a technically oriented architectural educational and research tradition. Sally, however, in her own PRS presentations, often talks about the tradition at her own school, but I still wonder what that tradition is, at least in relation to other institutions in the UK. Other people from UK seem to understand her 'automatically'. After visiting the Mackintosh room at her school I believe I feel it: the feeling is so close to the one at our school's Plecnik's room. But, there is another person from the same period who is also important in Ljubljana that is Ivan Vurnik. He is referred to as the 'technical' one. The next generation brought a similar duality: Edvard Ravnikar and Edo Mihevc. And the next generation kept this dichotomy. And following generations try to bridge the gaps, however, this is discouraged by the already mentioned dichotomy from the higher institutional level. That is why, since its establishment, the architecture school in Ljubljana has tried to find a balance between the 'artistic' and 'technical'.

The fact that words, visual and other communication materials can be understood in different ways in different contexts, leads to both: the awareness of being understood, partially or not understood at all, when a certain community we appreciate reacts. I would suggest that this represents a creative trigger in creative practice research.

The awareness of the cultural triggers of creativity in relation to the diversity of disciplinary, supra-disciplinary, multi- and/or inter-disciplinary communities brings a wide variety of relevance-related scales and modes into the discussion. In turn, the supervisor's duty/mission is to help creative practitioners-researchers in their discoveries of public behaviours, to assist them in identifying their most important communities of relevance. Furthermore, the concept of specific and general is changed to 'close and distant enough to become relevant'.

### **Recognition of relevance by creative practitioner/researcher as a creative trigger**

Which is the strongest trigger of creativity, that can occur in a specific moment (of communication) and which is a long-term driver? Is it the professional context relevance, research community or local general community? What is the direct/indirect relevance of specific knowledge explicated in the process of creative practice

research? What is the most narrow and the widest possible relevant context that can be addressed with this knowledge? After we identify who is close and far enough that we can begin to identify the relevance of creative practice research, we need to translate that knowledge. So translation is also an integral part of creative practice research, especially when faced with different traditions of practice/research.

### Personal and community triggers

I would like to address the questions mentioned above through discussions about the identification of an individual researcher with/by the research community.

When I first met a group of the ‘practice based research’ people in Ghent, in 2007, I felt the strength of the energy deriving from the community. At that time the Graduate Research Conference (GRC) was organised in parallel with another research event, called the Toonweekend. The first one represented the ‘RMIT’ PhD research approach idea, clearly focused to practice based research (referred to as the ‘model’ in this text, Blythe, R. and van Schaik, L. 2013), and the second one developed locally, linked closer to the ideas of research through design. The two-fold research path identified was also inspiring for me at that time.

From the today’s perspective, knowing the ‘model’ and its development better, I can say that the weekend stimulated me to rethink briefly my own practice, and especially my personal ‘community of practice’, which includes the research tradition of my school. I nearly skipped the first step, what, according to the ‘model’, should represent the reflection on the actual practice works, because I was quite satisfied with the awareness, that my practice is more teaching and (academic) research and research management than ‘pure’ art/design practice. Nowadays, I am not the typical design practitioner the ‘model’ was primarily developed for. Perhaps I was, for a while, but my practice shifted due to my own choice of the path two decades ago. After all, in the spirit of the ‘model’, I should continue with my actual practice, that is teaching and research, no? Last but not least, I finished my PhD thesis in architecture nearly twenty years ago. These years I feel no need to follow any research ‘model’ literally. I prefer thinking about approaches rather than about ‘models’. Perhaps this is due to the fact that English is not my primary language, and perhaps I take the notion of the word ‘model’ too literally. During my continuity of the GRC experiences in Ghent I felt some familiarity, a specific kind of closeness to the

‘model’ and I wanted to discover the origins of that closeness. On the other hand I also felt the distance, without being aware of where exactly that comes from. That is probably why I found myself in the preparatory phase of the ADAPT-r project development, representing the University of Ljubljana, and in the ADAPT-r project itself. From the today’s perspective I can say that it is the dynamic balance of closeness and distance with this research stream, which keeps my engagement and motivates my actions, in my roles first as a panel member and later as a supervisor of the candidates following this particular process.

I can also say that there is little wonder that I have not noticed the same group as relevant for myself and my local research environment perhaps twenty years earlier. Perhaps this was due to the inwardness of the streams; nowadays participants are able to communicate with each other. Last but not least, during that time I was focused towards another research community, relating to architectural computing, where I am still active, and where I also met Johan Verbeke from Sint-Lucas in Brussels, who, a couple of decades later, knowing my research attitudes and the endeavours of my school, invited me to some of the research by design and practice based research streams/communities.

There is a person in the ADAPT-r project I recognized first as an exception in the ‘model’, with an academic role close to myself. That person is Sally Steward from the Glasgow School of Art, who I mentioned earlier. Actually, her role is double: she is not only the representative of her school in the project. She is also enrolled at RMIT and an integral part of the ‘model’, investigating her own practice, which is different from others. Teaching and academic management predominates in her practice, while the majority of other practices are focused to professional engagements. She proves that it is possible to use the same model different ways, with very different contexts of relevance.

As researchers we need time to identify with or to be identified by our chosen communities. Some people are better in that than other. Gitte Juul is, for example, a person with an ability of rapid adaptation to her communities of relevance. She bridges the gaps organizing joint actions with locals at each locality level she works with. Because her creative practice is nomadic, she fights more with the problem of distance than closeness. Seeing herself on a mission is motivating for herself and for others. Intentionally disturbing situations progressively can be motivating for others, but needs also a high level of sensitivity to specific situations. What is left in the community after she moves somewhere else? These communities

cannot be as rapid in adaptation as an individual.

At the community level the period of adaptation is longer. Each new person close enough to be accepted and far enough to be able to slightly redirect the flow, is thus interesting enough for others, relevant and adds to the incremental adaptation process. What is the most radical view of creative practice research, which is still acceptable by the ADAPT-r people? Too many singularities become similarity and sameness through time. There was a nice period of attending PRS-s for me when I felt the energy of the events very clearly. A couple of years later the awareness of sameness seemed stronger, though the feeling of energy remained constant. Observing a new wave of people and the way the community adapts to and is adapted by these people is a new trigger for me, coming from the community itself.

Not only relevant knowledge, but appropriate knowledge presentation and dissemination is required to achieve an audience that we believe is relevant. How can we shift from thinking about right and wrong questions to identifying relevant questions instead? Relevant for whom? These are the questions formulated in a way that the answers are not obvious but also that they are answerable, at least with reformulated or new questions. What is the level clearance/ambiguity of the questions or of the presentation modes needed to trigger creativity? How can we come close enough to a specific community to fight with or against? How can we remain far enough to keep an overview and to be able to look beyond the community issues at the same time? What triggers the change from hesitation between positive response or ignorance/rejection to recognition by a specific community of creative practice research?

#### **Communities of research <> communities of research relevance**

Communities of creative practice research relevance differ from the communities of creative practice research itself. The diversity of levels of understanding requires looking beyond the basic limits of communities as singularities. Not only explication but also the translation of knowledge is required. Experiential knowledge can be communicated but needs translation through many language layers, from visual to verbal, from abstract to concrete and vice versa. Barriers of understanding/knowledge transfer can be seen as creative triggers, some of them related with character traits and behavioural issues, both individual and community.

## **6.3 Theoretical contextualisation of the usefulness of creative practice research: A tactical view**

*Eli Hatleskog*

This section will discuss creative practice research from a tactical point of view, in order to try to explore why creative practice research is relevant to us today. It will look at the collaborative nature of knowledge production in contrast to earlier modernist notions of creativity, whereby creativity was assumed to be an individual endeavour. The text will then explore how innovation may be prompted through the conversations and actions of communities of practice. This will reveal who knowledge may be produced relationally across communities of practice and lead to the conclusion that creative practice today is a dynamic interrelational activity that can help us to collaboratively develop ideas for the future.

*'Ideas' are a form of political and cultural imagination that can guide societies as they seek to manage change [...] In the absence of powerful and practical imagined futures people will retreat into tradition or defer to the claims of technical knowledge.*

Hirst, Paul. (1995). *Education and the Production of New Ideas, AA Files 29*, London: AA Publications, p. 44.

What is the relevance of creative practice research today? Now, after twenty years of development, creative practice research has established itself, as a valid research methodology, across Europe and beyond.<sup>113</sup> What started with a question, that seemed radical at

113 See for example: ADAPT-r ITN, University of Sheffield, Oxford Brookes, the University of Westminster, Glasgow School of Art, Edinburgh College of Art, the Bartlett School of Architecture, and the Manchester School of Architecture, Sint-Lucas School of Architecture, Oslo School of Architecture, Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, the School of Architecture at Lund University of Technology, and the School of Architecture at Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg and RMIT.

the time, *what could research in the medium of creative practice be?*<sup>114</sup> has become increasingly more mainstream. In turn, there are ample opportunities to do research in many varied forms of creative practice. These range from: architecture, art, dance, design, filmmaking, music, writing, new media, and also disciplines beyond those normally considered 'creative'. This broad acceptance of creative practice research, as a recognised approach to research, means that we can move on from discussions of *is it research?* toward questioning the intentions, purpose and outcomes of this type of research.

Asking why we need creative practice research is important, since it is different to other types of research. In turn, rather than assuming that creativity is an end in itself, it can be understood to have much broader societal significance. It addresses themes, concerns and knowledge production through the development of new ideas and the use of imagination and, as such, is inherently future-orientated.<sup>115</sup> The approach differs to both quantitative and qualitative approaches, which tend to look backwards, since it seeks neither to measure, explain and predict events, (it is not deductive) nor does it aim to explore and construct theories. The outputs of creative practice research are not limited to either numbers or words, but can be framed instead by the imagination.

The future-orientation of creative practice research gives it a special place in society. It deals with the new, the unknown, the desired and the undesirable.<sup>116</sup> It can challenge us to think about who we want to be and allow us to question our intentions and consider new ways of doing things. It can enable us to *see things differently*.<sup>117</sup> As such, everything we do as creative practice researchers is in some way political.

With this in mind, what are the intentions, purposes and

outcomes of creative practice research? What are we doing and why? There can, at times, be a myopic slant to creative practice research, which sees practitioners look into their souls and practice for answers. Whilst this, no doubt, can reveal some of the methods, intentionality and actions in practice, it also demonstrates a twentieth century, modernist, mind-set at work. Today, however, knowledge is understood to be developed through communities of practice and as such can be socially constructed and multiple,<sup>118</sup> so it would be fair to say that modernist singularities lack the depth, complexity and context, that we now understand, and expect, to be present in creative practice research.

Rather than being an essence, contained within the individual, knowledge in creative practice research is largely social and distributed amongst different communities of practice. These communities provide fields of significance, contexts and relationships, against which the intentions, purposes and outcomes of creative practice research may be framed. Creativity goes way beyond the individual, it relates to the things that we value and share. In turn, these things can act as incentives and triggers to creativity.

Furthermore, by considering that creative practice can provide ideas, imagined futures for society, some broader considerations arise, which relate to the intentions, purposes and outcomes of research through creative practice. These are concerns about the ethics of creative practice research, the responsibilities of researchers and the impact of the research: its sustainability. After all, our future is not singular; it is common.<sup>119</sup>

### What creativity used to be

Over the past twenty years, understandings of what creativity is have profoundly changed; the notion of the creative genius has been dispelled, in favour of a more relational understanding of creativity that operates in networks and across disciplines and fields.

As an example of the modernist creative genius, the writings of Howard Gardner describe a creative mind-set, which shows

114 Following on, not least from the work of Leon van Schaik: Van Schaik, L. & Johnson, A. (2011). *Architecture and Design: BY PRACTICE, BY INVITATION: Design Practice Research at RMIT*. Melbourne: onepointsixone.

115 Frayling, C. (1993). *Research in art and design*. V: Royal College of Art: Research Paper, 1 (1).

Hirst, Paul. (1995). *Education and the Production of New Ideas*, AA Files 29, London: AA Publications.

116 Mouffe, C. (1999). *Deliberative democracy or antagonistic pluralism?*. *Social Research*, 66 (3), pp. 745-58.

Frayling, C. (1993). *Research in art and design*. V: Royal College of Art: Research Paper, 1 (1).

Hirst, Paul. (1995). *Education and the Production of New Ideas*, AA Files 29, London: AA Publications.

117 Sullivan, G. (2011). *CREATIVITY AS RESEARCH PRACTICE*, *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education*, London: Springer.

118 Wenger, E. "Communities Of Practice And Social Learning Systems". *Organization* 7.2 (2000): 225-246. And, Amin, A., & Cohendet, P. (2004). *Architectures of knowledge: Firms, Capabilities, and Communities*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

119 In reference to the UN's 1987 Brundtland Report <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>.



similarities to an objectivist world-view.<sup>120</sup> In 1993, Gardner published ‘Creating Minds’, in the book he describes investigations into seven people<sup>121</sup> who he deemed to be ‘master creators’ from the modern era (1885-1935): Sigmund Freud; Albert Einstein; Pablo Picasso; Igor Stravinsky; TS Eliot; Martha Graham and Mahatma Gandhi.

The study concluded that creative masters come from supportive homes lacking in emotional warmth; are prone to mental fragility; are rebellious by nature; treat others badly (from disregarding people, to out and out sadism); feel marginalised, isolated and lonely, so move to a metropolis; are productive every single day, and are under the illusion that they have made some kind of Faustian pact, whereby they feel that they have sacrificed everything for their talent. These conclusions seem to suggest the singular ego of a ‘master creator’ requires a great deal of self-actualization, which comes about, in part, through the dogged rejection of relationships, context and community.

However, it must be remembered that Gardner’s social science study, aimed at developing reflections about how to study creative processes, was developed through a sample size of only seven. So, it does not represent all of creativity – either by masters or amateurs, but only a very small part. Indeed, Gardner himself asserts that if he had chosen other subjects, then his results would have been quite different. To demonstrate this he discusses the conclusion that ‘master creators’ move to the city and notes that with a different choice of master, Ludwig Wittgenstein, he, ‘would have detected an opposite pattern.’(p. xv) Following on from this, his conclusion that creative people were difficult and disposed to treat others badly, could equally have been reversed if different subjects, like for example Charles Darwin, had been chosen.(p. xvi)

The study sought to look at recognised creative minds with a view to constructing broad generalisations from these few case studies. These generalisations were, however, specific to the time period and mind-set that the selected subjects, the masters, operated in: the modern era. However, since ‘Creating Minds’ was first published, we have undergone a paradigm shift from the modern to the post-modern and as a result of this shift, Gardener’s conclusions

cannot be applied with any real significance to contemporary notions of creativity.

This is something that Howard Gardner himself acknowledges. In the preface to the 2011 edition, he discusses the transition from modernism to post-modernism and the impact that this had with regard to his earlier writings:

*I was aware that this era was at an end, and that we had embarked on an era that was postmodern: both in the literal sense, of succeeding the modern era, and in the rhetorical sense, an era exhibiting its own epistemology and aesthetics. [...] Briefly, the postmodern era is a time when any claim of ultimate truth or morality is shunned, where genres are blurred and readily mixed, and when seriousness is challenged and irony is favored. And had I been more prescient, I would have anticipated the dominance of the digital media: global communication, the collapse of time and space, instant access to knowledge and to personal messages, and powerful interpersonal networks. [...] more of artistic work is collaborative—across genres and disciplines, and even with teams of creators.<sup>122</sup>*

Following on from the idea that creativity is now a collaborative endeavour, new forms of media and communication have altered our understanding of what creativity can mean. After all, there is no need for any artist to feel isolated, move to the city or reject all human relationships, when virtual networks can connect people with common concerns across both time and space. In the same way that the invention of printed media altered the spaces through which knowledge was both produced and distributed,<sup>123</sup> immaterial networks have changed our understandings of knowledge, which, in turn, has impacted upon how new ideas can be produced through creative processes.

### What creativity can be

Given that creativity goes well beyond the individual, the issue of creative practice research is complex. In turn, the question of what creativity can be today relates to what individuals choose to

120 Rand, A. (1961). For the new intellectual. New York: Signet. p.79:

The basic need of the creator is independence. The reasoning mind cannot work under any form of compulsion. It cannot be curbed, sacrificed or subordinated to any consideration whatsoever. It demands total independence in function and in motive. To a creator, all relations with men are secondary.

121 Of which only one was female, suggesting his writings promote the notion of the predominantly male master.

122 Gardner, H. (1993, 2011). Creating minds: An anatomy of creativity seen through the lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Gandhi. New York: Basic Books. Pp. xviii-xiv

123 As famously declared by the Archdeacon in Victor Hugo’s, Notre Dame de Paris (Book V) [Hugo, V., & Guyard, M. (1961). Notre-Dame de Paris. Paris: Éditions Garnier frères.] “This will destroy that. The book will destroy the edifice.”

share, have in common or disagree upon. There are many potential contexts and relationships that may be relevant to creative practice, with this in mind creative practice research may be seen to relate to how a practitioner/researcher decides to frame their interactions, engagements and collaborations with others. It is with regard to this act of framing that new knowledge can begin to be produced transforming creative practice into creative practice research.

In turn, by thinking about knowledge as being socially constructed, something which operates within networks, in relationships and between actors, it becomes clear that there is no singular thing that amounts to knowing, instead there are multiple knowledges. In turn, understanding knowledge to be multiple influences considerations about creativity. Creativity can be a new idea, imagination and/or innovation; it too is multiple. As such, it can be thought of as responsive and relational, not classic and timeless.

This raises the question, how is creativity recognised? If it is not an essential quality waiting to be discovered then where does it come from? The simple answer is that it comes from us: we recognise creativity; we define it; we shape it; and we understand it both singularly and collectively. In turn, although, or because, we are linked across networks through commonalities,<sup>124</sup> we do not all have to agree what creativity is. This is exactly why it has to be multiple, responsive and relational.

As such, whilst the creative practitioner plays a key role in the creative process, that role is singular and lacks meaning without consensus. In other words, communities need to identify with the creative practice in such a way that common ground is found in the agreement that something is, or is not, creative. This means that creativity can be defined in common through the crowd.

*... it is the community and not the individual who makes creativity manifest.*

Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, 16

As such, creativity can be understood as innovation that is appreciated in some way by others. It is not self-contained; it has meaning only in that others say it does.

*... what we call creativity is not the product of single individuals, but of social systems making judgements about individual's products. Any definition of creativity [...] will*

124 Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2004). *Multitude*. New York: The Penguin Press. P. 105.

*have to recognise the fact that the audience is as important to its constitution as the individual to whom it is credited.*

Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, 3

The seemingly symbiotic relationship between a creative practitioner and his/her audience suggests a dynamic through which exchanges between the two depend upon a certain degree of commonality. There is an underlying complicity, whereby it is not only that the creative practitioner produces ideas, but that the audience expects those very ideas. The audience's anticipation of creativity may, in turn, put pressure on the creative practitioner to act in a particular way. This means the audience is by no means neutral, there is a tension between the creative practitioner and the audience and whether negative, positive or something else, this tension may trigger creativity.

As such, to call the audience an audience is perhaps incorrect, since that suggests a one-way flow of knowledge from the individual creative practitioner to the observing public. Furthermore, given the rise of social media, it is doubtful whether a passive observing public even exists anymore. So, rather than trying to think of audiences or publics, it is perhaps more useful to take into account: contexts; processes; social interactions; material practices; ambiguities and disagreements,<sup>125</sup> and talk about communities of practice.<sup>126</sup> These communities of practice are not measures through which creativity can be judged and appreciated. But rather, they support, prompt and produce innovation through enhancing individual and collective competences.

Knowledge is developed through communities of practice as shared interest and alignment; it is 'the product of habits and everyday interaction in which thinking and acting are combined in inseparable unity'.<sup>127</sup> In turn, creativity may be understood to relate to processes, which include three different types of knowledge:

- There is *input knowledge*<sup>128</sup>, which is the knowing before action. It relates to the skills, experience and understandings of the creative practitioners and

125 Amin, A., & Roberts, J. (2008). Knowing in action: Beyond communities of practice. *Research Policy*, 37(2), 353-369.

126 IBID.

127 Amin, A., & Cohendet, P. (2004). *Architectures of knowledge: Firms, Capabilities, and Communities*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. p. 62.

128 Verbeke, J. (2002). Gerard de Zeeuw and Architectural Research. *Systems Research & Behavioral Science*, 19 (2), 159-166

communities of practice. It is competence.

- There is also *output knowledge*<sup>129</sup>, which is the knowing as a result of action. It is the outcome of the creative process and ideally results in a new idea. It is innovation.<sup>130</sup>
- However, between competence and innovation knowledge is also developed relationally through collaborations and interaction, *relational knowledge*. This is knowledge in action and is produced through communication.

The *input knowledge* is what any given creative practice researcher brings to his/her research. It is composed of all of their existing skills and experiences. It is what they have learnt through doing practice and can be seen demonstrated through their actions and responses in practice. It can be developed over time through repeated operations, such as doing things, trying things out, copying others, and learning from anticipated and unanticipated responses. Quite simply, it comes about through practicing something over time.

Given that competence lies largely in actions taken, it is for the most part unspoken. It may be thought of as the reasoning behind any number of tacit operations. These tacit operations are not, however, contained or controlled by any one individual, but work instead across communities of practice. As such, competence has dynamic capabilities,<sup>131</sup> and allows the framing of knowledge across communities of practice. In turn, competences can also overlap, compliment and contrast each other across creative communities:

*Creative communities are those that are able to confront and channel difference and disagreement. Learning within them is clearly partly a matter of exploiting existing competences, but it is also both about retaining variety so that these new opportunities are not lost and renegotiating the creative play of dissonance, ambiguity, struggling with otherness, and rivalries.*

Amin & Cohendet (2004)

This suggests that relationships between competences can be both diverse and nuanced, but, not only that, they can also

be productive. Competence is not static, it develops and learns in response to situations and experiences. As such, it is a type of knowledge that is constantly in flux and whilst it can be described, any description can only be a momentary understanding.

With regard to creative practice research, competence may be considered as a framework to the narrative of research, which itself changes over time. This framework may give confidence to actions, instil doubt or bring conflict; however, it can also provide support to creativity, since it provides a dynamic set of relationships and situations in which actions may happen.

The *output knowledge* of creative practice would ideally be innovation of some sort. Innovation may be regarded as change of some sort. The practitioner aspires to make something new, or to have an original idea. For a creative practitioner innovation may result in the production of an artefact, event or experience. In turn, what is new or original can only be seen in relation to the existing context, as perceived by communities of practice. This lends a great deal of specificity to innovation. It is situated. So where competence may be regarded as a framework in which the practitioner has the potential to act, innovation occurs at a specific point and time within these potentials. It is a moment of crystallisation and transformation.

In order for innovation to be innovative it must be recognised as such by the creative practice researcher's communities of practice, as such the knowledge produced is relational. This also means that the new and original can only be defined as new and original in relation to the past. As such the question of *when* innovation occurs becomes critical. This suggests that with regard to creative output/innovation, as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi asserted in 1996, the question need not be *what is creativity?* But rather: *when is creativity?*

Indeed, as Graeme Sullivan (2007, 83) states (whilst discussing Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi),

*'creativity [is] not something [...] contained within the head and heart of a person, but [...] an outcome [...] given meaning by what others [have] to say about it.' Furthermore, as Frank Blacker asserts, 'knowing should be studied as practice, and practice should be studied as activity that is rooted in time and culture'.*

(2002, 63)

Thinking about the temporal dimensions of creative innovation allows us to move on from the idea that the outputs of creative practice are singular, self-standing artefacts, since every creative innovation performs across space, time and context and in relation

129 Ibid.

130 The notions of input and output knowledge connect to: Verbeke, J. (2002). Gerard de Zeeuw and Architectural Research. *Systems Research & Behavioral Science*, 19 (2), 159-166.

131 Amin, A., & Cohendet, P. (2004). *Architectures of knowledge: Firms, Capabilities, and Communities*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. p. 62.

to various communities of practice. As such, the outputs of creative practice go well beyond any objects of practice, such as: paintings, sculptures and buildings.<sup>132</sup>

Where it is clear that there is knowledge in both the inputs (competences) and the outputs (innovations) of creative practice and that these knowledges rely upon space, time and context, and operate with regard to communities of practice, the knowledge in creative practice cannot be classified as research unless it is framed as such. *Doing creative practice is not the same as doing creative practice research.* With this in mind, it can be useful to consider the knowledge that may be produced somewhere between competence and innovation, when seeking to conduct creative practice research.

In order to make the transition from creative practice to creative practice research, practice needs to be framed differently. This framing would typically be achieved, in the first instance, with regard to a length of time. This could be the duration it takes to complete a PhD project, or other research fellowship. It is during this time, that a practitioner/researcher has the opportunity to position themselves with regard to their own research. This could be done through considering their relationships to communities and knowledge. In turn, they might consider the competences that they have acquired over the years and the innovations that they have been a part of, in relation to where they are today, or perhaps, where they want to be, and with regard to, *context, process, social interaction, material practices, ambiguity, disagreement*, in other words, communities of practice of which they are a part.

By considering these relationships, creative practitioners can find ways to frame their practice, so that it becomes research, at the same time as developing knowledge relationally. Indeed, it would seem that relational knowledge is critical to creative practice research, since it can be produced through collaborations and interactions. It can develop shared connections between past experiences and future ideas. It is a type of knowledge that is present in action and refined and developed through communication, where communication is understood much more broadly than just speech. It includes actions, movements and data, which mediates across communities of practice, fields, disciplines, humans and non-humans. It represents conversations about shared experiences, concerns, identities, tools and engagements.

132 Till, J. (2011). Is doing architecture doing research? 4th International Meeting On Architectural And Urbanism Research, Valencia: Universitat Politècnica De València  
'Architecture exceeds the building as object, just as art exceeds the painting as object.'

*... knowledge is not simply communicated between actors (human and mechanic), but is generated through communication – speech acts, conversations bodily gestures, glances, expressions, data exchanges, machine to machine interactions, are the relational iterations through which we know, understand, and learn.*

Amin & Cohendet, 2004, 67

Conversations can be understood as communication that develop and reveal relationships between actors. They operate socially, in both context and time, by creating common links and interactions across the field of research. As such, a conversation is not simply two people talking, but the negotiation of relationships and can be operationalized with a view to explicating knowledge through creative practice research.

This view of conversation supports the idea that understandings of context/spatiality do not necessarily develop when visiting or experiencing a space (even although that can be a factor), but rather that conversations can link actors across a field that is both temporal and spatial, in such a way that knowledge may be developed somewhere else entirely and at a different time, through the act of investigating and developing relationships in conversation. (McFarlane, 2011, 7)

Conversations and the development of relational knowledge is vital to creative practice research, not only because it contextualises the research, but also because it can make it relevant to the creative professions, communities of practice and society at large. In turn, conversation allows for both the co-creation of knowledge and the sharing of ideas. It can trigger, develop and disseminate creativity.

Furthermore, much of creative practice is already about conversation. Architecture, art, dance, design, filmmaking, music, writing and new media, can all be forms of expression, whereby practitioners are engaging with the world and developing relationships. As such, it seems only sensible that creative practice research would harness this tendency, somehow, toward the pursuit of new knowledge.

Given that knowledge can be developed through conversations, which engage and act across various communities of practice, it would seem that creative practice research has an opportunity to think differently about how research itself is communicated. Creative practice researchers can work in any number of different media and fora. They need not be restricted by the format of the standard scientific article. There are many other ways for the sharing,



co-creation and dissemination of new knowledge.

By considering creative practice research as a means of developing knowledge through conversation, it can be understood as a way of framing practice as research and then exploring and developing relationships and conversations through practice, with a view to creating relational knowledge. This knowledge relates, not least, to time, space, context, communities of practice, competence and innovation. However, time, space, context, communities of practice, competence and innovation are themselves not static. They can evolve, adapt, resist and react, in relation to knowledge as it develops through creative practice research. As such, the conversations are not one way. There can be consensus, ambiguity and conflict. However, through the researcher and through communities of practice, there is always an intention of some sort. Conversations are never neutral. With this in mind, it becomes clear that there is no creativity for creativity's sake. There is always an objective, a purpose and an outcome and this is also the case for creative practice research.

### Why creative practice research

What then is the purpose of creative practice research? There is, of course not one simple intention, but multiple possible agendas and outcomes, which may result in many different forms of new knowledge. Over the past twenty years, creative practice research has asserted itself as a valid methodology. It is more than a way of studying creative processes with a view to developing new understandings. If the purpose were simply to investigate knowing in practice, it would not need its own methods, reflective practice would suffice.<sup>133</sup> Creative practice research is also about the products of practice. Of course there is knowledge embedded in the artefacts, events or experiences of creative practice, however, that knowledge is only a small part of the knowledge residing in creative practice.

Creative practice may be thought of as the dynamic negotiations of various competences across communities of practice, leading to innovation. In turn, it may be suggested that the role of creative practice research is to explicate knowledge from these dynamic relationships or conversations. This knowledge is propagated by competence and can result in innovation. However, in order to become research, creative practice needs to be framed in relation to practitioner/researchers and communities of practice. This can

133 Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.

*Figure 6.3  
Mediated group  
interview*



*Figure 6.4  
Practice  
Research  
Symposium as  
a conversation  
setting*



*Figure 6.5  
Relaxed  
conversations  
over tea, snacks  
and drawings*



result in a situated, yet dynamic, knowledge, that is produced in context through the development of relationships.

By understanding creative practice research as being situated with regard to relationships, across broad fields, or networks, between practitioner/researchers, communities of practice and society, it becomes clear that the role of the researcher is critical to the process of the research. This can be challenging for creative practice researchers, since, often, they might assume that it is their creative productions, whether artefacts, events, experiences or something else, that communicate across networks on their behalf. However, where creative productions can mediate to some degree with communities of practice and society, they do not stand alone. They are always embedded in particular contexts, spaces and time, and set in direct regard to the agency of the creative practice researcher(s) and communities of practice. There are many invisible forces, intentions and agendas at work.

This is even the case when practitioner/researchers do not think that they are actively practicing or researching. As such, it must be understood that the titles of: artist, musician, architect, and sculptor, are all imbued with different types of agency, which the communities of practice respond tacitly to. So, a member of the public might speak to an architect with an expectation, or understanding, that that very architect can help, or hurt them, in some way. The title of architect suggests that the person holding it has the power to act in a particular way, even if they say they do not and have no intention of doing so. Nevertheless, the title triggers a different kind of conversation. Following on from this, this agency also extends to the title of researcher and as such, when creative practitioners call themselves researchers, other kinds of tacit responses can develop.

With this in mind, it would seem naïve to think that any creative practice researcher could be treated as an objective entity within his/her research. By the very nature of creative practice, the researcher is enmeshed in complex relationships and contexts that they can never simply observe, in the same way that they can never simply be observed.

This lack of neutrality suggests that creative practice researchers need to think carefully about the ethics of what they do, their responsibilities and what the outcomes might be. Is the creative practice research sustainable, both materially and socially? After all, communities of practice are dynamic and responsive. In other words, are situations made better or worse by the actions of creative practice researchers?

Creative practice research gives us the opportunity to see

things differently, however, things, once seen, cannot be unseen, so there is an ethical responsibility for researchers to think about the changes that they might expect to exert through practice. Creative practice research does not take place in a vacuum, so communities of practice and society can all be affected in some way. This raises the question: what do we use creative practice research for, is it just about *seeing things differently*, or is it also about thinking about things relationally and *saying different things*?

### Conclusion

Creativity is not an end in itself, however, it can support the development of knowledge through interactions, engagements and collaborations. As such, creative practice research is not about singularities. It is a means of researchers framing their intentions with regard to communities of practice. This type of positioning is inherently political, not least since both the practitioner/researcher and communities of practice have agency and are dynamic. When it comes to doing research across the diverse field that is practice, it may, in turn, be useful for practitioner/researchers to consider what is common. What values do they share with others? What responsibilities and ethics? In turn, how can these shared values help to trigger ideas and what are the common futures that may be imagined together?

## 6.4 Research by action: From the point of view of an early stage ADAPT-r INT research fellow

*Gitte Juul*

### Abstract

This paper is an exchange between action and reflection. The point of departure is a project done while being an ADAPT-r fellow at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture. It is contextualized in relation to projects done in the past and building up to projects coming in the future; situated in different spaces, contexts and time. Intertwined will be observations on unpredictability, value of things, challenging of the State, ownership to land and how architecture can be used to investigate something. The aim of the paper is to look at the perception of public space from the East to the West, emphasizing the importance of maintenance, culture and realities of cities, rather than innovation, global growth and visions of cities. It argues that any place / situation needs to have a strategy for how to maintain its culture - which is not always about innovation and growth - and every city needs to know and understand its resources and realities before creating great visions

### To learn about society and its mechanisms

Receiving a ten-month ADAPT-r fellowship in creative practice research, gave me the opportunity to move to Ljubljana to explore and investigate an unfamiliar context. When working outside one's usual cultural and geographical setting, it is important to maintain a greater degree of self-doubt than usual, since it is difficult for an outsider to comprehend the complexity of any local situation. This became evident to me as I sat in the City Pub in Ljubljana with a local resident, discussing the conflict surrounding the Bežigrad stadium, designed by Slovene architect Jože Plečnik (1872-1957). The stadium is currently torn between different planning interests, cultural heritage values, understandings of the law and blame for the blocked situation. One of the key disputes in the stadium conflict is a court case about the legal right to a piece of land, which has been

functioning as allotment gardens for a social housing community situated just outside the stadium walls since the 1930s. In 2007, residents abruptly discovered that there were plans for redeveloping the stadium and gardens, when, without prior warning, the site was fenced off. Since then they have established 'The Local Initiative' (<http://www.iztepac.net/>) and are fighting for use of the allotments and for the protection of the stadium in its original form.

In opposition to them, an investor wants to renovate the stadium to meet new commercial standards. Between these two opposites, the Institute of Cultural Heritage Protection is expected to protect the work of Jože Plečnik, since the stadium got status as a monument of National Importance. While the battle continues the stadium is falling into disrepair and unable to adapt.

In 2002, the investor presented his ideas for the renovation of the stadium to the press. It was a homogenous vision with plans and sections, 3D renderings and a scale model creating an overall view of the future. However, a number of dimensions seemed to be missing from the proposals, such as the question of ownership of the allotment gardens and concerns relating to the reduction of a historic monument to decorative elements within a large scale building complex.

In their 2008 essay "Give me a gun and I will make all buildings move", the French scientist and philosopher Bruno Latour together with anthropologist Albenia Yaneva addressed what they saw as the problem of static representations of buildings, proposing instead presentations of project flows, that make up buildings.

*The 3D-CAD rendering of a project is so utterly unrealistic. Where do you place the angry clients and their sometimes-conflicting demands? Where do you insert the legal and city planning constraints? Where do you locate the budgeting and the different budget options? Where do you put the logistics of the many successive trades? Where do you situate the subtle evaluation of skilled versus unskilled practitioners? Where do you archive the many successive models that you had to modify so as to absorb the continuous demands of so many conflicting stakeholders—users, communities of neighbours, preservationists, clients, representatives of the government and city authorities? Where do you incorporate the changing program specifics? You need only to think for one minute, before confessing that Euclidian space is the space in which buildings are drawn on paper but not the environment in*



*which buildings are built—and even less the world in which they are lived.*

Latour, B., Yaneva, A. (2008)

In order to try to understand the logic behind the different aspects of the stadium conflict and to begin to invent what Latour describes as “a visual vocabulary that will do justice to the ‘thingly’ nature of buildings”, I decided to unfold the history of the stadium and tell the story of how it became ‘made and un-made’. The idea was to visualize the history of the stadium as a dynamic series of situations. Behind this process there was a system for investigation, collecting, collaborating, building, recording, editing and exhibiting. To be able to incorporate uncertainty and the unforeseen on route, the project was developed from meetings with citizens, the investor, the Municipality and the Institute for Heritage Protection, parallel to a workshop with students from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Ljubljana.

In order to explore the history of the stadium as a participatory experience, the project *Stadium NOWHERE* grew out of these meetings and discussions with people and organisations directly involved in the conflict and it aimed to admit all the complexities of the encounters into the working process. I decided upon seven different aspects relating to the history of the stadium, which I then gave to the students and invited them to design and build seven nomadic physical structures from their own interpretation of history.

*Stadium NOWHERE* aimed to portray history as observations of both “historical moments” and everyday occurrences. Beginning with Jože Plečnik’s vision for Ljubljana, the story continues up to the present conflict and the abandoned stadium that is taken over by plants. The troubled present is seen as a motion from the events of the past to the hope for the future. “Historical moments” with architectural visions, religious ceremonies, military ceremonies, sporting events, commercialization, cultural heritage issues and environmental/ neighbourhood issues, built as physical structures, manifest the passage of time. Time is turned into space, revealing history as a story of unfolding time, which need not be chronological or finished. The structures were walked into the city of Ljubljana as an interaction between materials, physical urban space with its static buildings and people using the space, in order to create a dynamic and open-ended presentation of the future. An open-ended presentation of the future is important since the project aimed at inviting people to discuss the parameters a redevelopment

Figure 6.6  
*Stadium  
NOWHERE  
Walk*  
12.06.2015:  
crossing  
Trnovski most /  
Trnovo Bridge  
(Jože Plečnik:  
1929–32)



Figure 6.7  
*Stadium  
NOWHERE  
Walk*  
12.06.2015:  
walking the  
streets of  
Ljubljana City





of the stadium could be defined by and what might add value to the stadium and its surrounding neighbourhood as a place in Ljubljana.

*Stadium NOWHERE* was a response that no one asked for. It was produced by an outsider with an interest in learning about the collective behaviour, rationales and ideals of society. With Latour and Yaneva in mind, a building is contested territory and cannot be reduced to what it is and what it means. With *Stadium NOWHERE* we worked on revealing the existence of the stadium by exposing the buildings disputes and performances over time: how it had resisted attempts of transformation, challenged city authorities and mobilized different communities of actors. The project was made through action in motion and time rather than through static image production. According to Latour and Yaneva “we either see the uncontested static object standing out there waiting to be reinterpreted, or we hear about the conflicting human purposes, but are never able to picture the two together.” (Latour, B., Yaneva, A. 2008) This way of visualizing the conflict could maybe be a platform for starting a discussion about redevelopment of the stadium - and other situations, which are having similar difficulties adapting.

Conventional city planning typically offers citizens a total solution when urban areas are getting developed or redeveloped. However, total solutions do usually not recognize the value that people and communities have already invested in their neighbourhood. Is it possible to link what Latour and Yaneva call “the uncontested static object” with the “conflicting human purposes”, and thereby learn to value the energy and effort created by citizens.

### To prepare for unpredictability

In 2001 the Danish Art Foundation sent out an open call for proposals on “Better, cheaper housing”. This was a chance to rethink the perception of housing planning and construction principles in Denmark. I set up a team with a small group of students and we formulated the proposal: *Articulation of a Building Site*. The concept focused on what needs to be planned for and what can be left unfinished, which demonstrated an architecture able to adapt to people’s desires and tried to integrate negotiations between neighbours. Our proposal related to (infra)structure and how changes could happen when needed. In other words, the proposal was a system supporting flexibility, but not a specific design for the apartments themselves. Residents could actively participate in the building process. They could take part in designing spatial arrangements that were not constant, but open to change over time. The Danish Art Foundation awarded the proposal and a private foundation offered to

Figure 6.8  
*ADAPT-r day*  
in Ljubljana  
11.06.2015:  
Discussion  
about the  
Stadiums  
present  
situation and  
its future.



Figure 6.9  
*Stadium*  
*NOWHERE*  
exhibited at MAO –  
Museum of  
Architecture  
and Design



support further development on the condition that a commercial large architectural firm could prove it was buildable. We worked on the concept for several years, but the project never got off the ground. In the end, it became clear that it was too radical and did not match the ideals of investors during the time of housing speculation just before the 2008 crisis. The project (Megastructure reference) shared common ground with the work of art- and architecture practice Hoff & Ussing (Hoff, C. & Ussing, S. 1977) who in 1970 -1979 experimented with how the creativity of each individual could evolve and physically take shape in a building. Twenty years earlier the architect Yona Friedman (Friedman, Y. 2006) had invented his project The Ville Spatiale, (1957-1962) which he spent fifty years exploring, trying to understand its potentials. The complexity of the proposal was to be found in an urbanity created by citizens themselves and not in architectural representations. The Ville Spatiale, Hoff & Ussing's housing project and our proposal all dealt with housing structures that tried to enable people to expand when needed or wanted.

### The value of things

Everyday situations always have some kind of pre-existing value. One just needs to acknowledge and amplify this value. Based on experiences of collaborating with large architectural firms - where it is difficult to avoid master plans and renderings - visualized futures made to please clients, politicians and decision makers - it seemed more and more relevant for me to move away from proposals created in the office. It made sense to shift to a process of action-based tactics, where I physically moved out to places, streets and squares, in order to build at a scale of 1:1 and face-to-face with people, whilst creating interventions in order to try to communicate with citizens, municipalities and other actors within the public realm.

At the peak of the building boom in Copenhagen, the Danish Art Foundation received a letter from a resident in a stigmatized social housing area "Urbanplanen". The letter highlighted some concerns that residents had relating to their neighbourhood and their belief that the renovation of the buildings alone would not change the stigma faced by the neighbourhood. Together with another architect, two visual artists and two art historians, I was asked to collaborate with the residents on a four-month project. We rejected the four-month timeframe because of the complexity of the relationships between the social housing area, the architecture,

*Figure 6.10  
Spatial  
Practice, 2008:  
still from a 3  
min. video,  
created in order  
to investigate  
how 22 people -  
acting residents  
in the proposed  
physical  
infrastructure  
- could change  
their living  
patterns over  
time.*



*Figure 6.11  
SOUP  
Urbanplanen,  
2008:  
"Worldkitchen"  
serving  
different soups*





the multicultural group of residents and administration. Instead, we chose to move into a disused supermarket in the area for eight months, where we worked with existing resources through community involvement in a self-examining process. Together we realized the project SOUP – Sun Over the Urban Plan; a temporary Bazar and a series of artistic interventions that grew out of the specific physical environment and the complex social situation. We tried to steer a course and prepare for the unexpected things that might happen en route – we did this by making things that the residents could see, touch, understand and build onto themselves. The vision for a Bazar seemed valuable for “Urbanplanen”, since it could also attract people from outside the neighbourhood and create jobs. The Municipality of Copenhagen, however, could not agree on bringing the Bazar into being on a more permanent basis, which left the residents of “Urbanplanen” with only a memory of an event that could have changed their future everyday lives.

In the book documenting the SOUP project, British artist Katherine Clarke from the art and architecture practice, Muf, wrote about what she considered the common ground between the work of SOUP and the enquiry procedures of Muf. When visiting SOUP, Clarke had a brief tour of the new quarter of “Ørestad” emerging from the scrubland south of central Copenhagen, her description of the situation is as follows:

*A calm relentless order overriding whatever lies beneath. The development subscribes to a master plan where detachment is writ large and consequently loses any contact with the grit of lived life. The SOUP project is only ten minutes down the road, but is really very, very far removed from this cool detachment: This is a project where the grit has grown a pearl. The project is a process, a set of relationships and a proposal instigated by artists and architects to interrogate existing frameworks and pull them into another shape allowing for different nuances of value. The project demonstrates how it is possible to produce meaningful work and is proof of the capacity of artists and other practitioners to establish strategies of critical speculation.*

(Clarke, K. 2008)

The work we did in collaboration with the citizens of “Urbanplanen” seems meaningful and relevant to artists, architects and the local people involved. The municipality also expressed the importance of the project, but when it came to reality there seemed

to be no political will and commitment. Again it raises the question of how to make the decision makers understand the value and importance of the local resources when planning for the future.

### The state and its challengers

The task of the state is to keep order and stability in society, which is done by ensuring that everyone follows set structures and rules. When the state is searching for new initiatives, it tends to probe something in the line of already existing experiences since repeating the same, or slightly modified seems to be a secure way of proceeding.

This leaves society with a reproduction of its own procedures. Since municipalities have to please their citizens as well as (national) politicians, ‘status quo’ is generally maintained and real change rarely happens. In order to drastically change things we have to recognize that everything is interchanging and interrelated and that we do not need to fear it..

The SOUP project led to an invitation from Ballerup Municipality to formulate ideas for a new nomadic project space that could work with alternatives to conventional planning strategies of the Municipality as a kind of self-examining process. The project space was named ‘The Office for Art in Town’ and sought new knowledge by constantly reinventing itself in relation to its surroundings. It questioned the conventional rules and systems of the authorities in the search for alternative ways of thinking about planning. The challenge was how to be involved with the municipality at the same time as producing critical action on the streets belonging to that very municipality. The danger was that either the authorities would dismiss the actions and exclude The Office for Art in Town, or they would absorb its activities into their system in order to make it an accepted part of the administration. Neither position is motivating. If The Office for Art in Town were to become institutionalized it would lose its progressive and dynamic properties. As such, the exercise required The Office for Art in Town to keep a healthy distance from the municipality, at the same time as getting permission to act critically in public. By working with art and architecture at the scale of 1:1, directly amongst and in collaboration with citizens, The Office sought to lift discussions out into public space, to enable a practice parallel to the usual practice of the municipality. Physically The Office for Art in Town moves around in the city centre of Ballerup occupying empty shops, streets and squares in a progressive manner, in order to be ahead of city development in Ballerup. The Office seeks to introduce artistic concepts into

already established and regulated structures to produce new type of situations and spaces, which can, in turn, lead to dialogues about possible futures. The overall aim is to push the boundaries of what is conventionally accepted in the public realm and to empower citizens to challenge authorities when it comes to the planning of our common living environment.

### The village and the city

Whilst writing this paper (summer of 2015), the nationalist ultra-right wing party became the second largest party in Denmark. The result of the election started a massive debate about the relationships between people living in cities and countryside, since the majority of the right wing votes came from the countryside. More than ever I see the importance of being in the suburbs, the villages and the countryside in order to try to create dialogues and collaborations, to reduce the perceived gap between “them” and “us”.

In the small village of Selde in Northern Zealand, a large group of citizens have taken the initiative to invite artists into their community. They are buying up abandoned houses and offering them to the community and to art projects. The community is interested in getting new perspectives on the shrinking village and in 2014 I was invited to work with a plot where the former Midwife clinic was situated. The citizens wanted a viewing tower. We discussed the possibility of not only making a singular point, but also to create a new route connecting the village with the surrounding landscape. Through dialogue and negotiation I proposed a series of paths, walkways, platforms and viewing points that altogether could help to increase the public sphere within the village. We built a mock-up of the viewing tower and discussed the issue of ownership as a group and the possibilities for creating a new route through the landscape along individual boundary edges. Ownership of land and protection of individual borders is something that is not so easily overcome.

Worldwide public spaces are under pressure and planning procedures seem to be mostly interested in the middle class and their ideas about the future. It may be difficult to perceive the world, as it is in reality. Indian city planner Rahul Mehrotra argues, that authorities do not worship Indian cities for their activities and diversity, the poetics of the street and the fragile and provisory structures next to the hard and static buildings; instead the people in power dream of clean and neat cities, represented by architectural objects, like every other metropolis. Mehrotra claims that the megacities of India can no longer be understood as dichotomies

*Figure 6.12 The Office for Art in Town, 2013: Rethinking the pedestrian street in Ballerup in collaboration with shopkeepers.*



*Figure 6.13 Midwife Plot, Selde, 2014: local citizen is searching for the viewpoint.*



between the formal city and the informal city. Informal residents are often employed in the formal sector and vice versa and the informal economy contributes financially to the formal sector through bribes and other payments to various formal authorities. To overcome this dichotomy, Mehrotra asks what we can learn from the informal sector, and how this can change how we plan for cities. “The West looks to the East and romanticizes the human energy. The East looks to the West and romanticizes the urban stability.” (Mehrotra, 2008). According to Mehrotra, the greatest challenge worldwide is to bridge the gap between perceptions from the East towards the West and vice versa.

To welcome this challenge I initiated a project, which took place in respectively the metropolis of Kolkata in India and in a small Swedish village called Kättilsmåla. The question was how to break down dichotomies such as urban-rural, public-private, temporary-permanent, and formal-informal by disrupting their conventional boundaries and hierarchies. The aim was to focus on different types of organization, use, materials, infrastructure, time and density, regardless of the very different locations on the world map. In both cases I intended to construct social and productive situations with the help of provisional structures.

Unlike the project in Selde, which was initiated by the villagers, my relation to Kättilsmåla is bound to my own studio space, The Mill, which is located in the flanking village. Earlier, the area was vibrant and energetic with four operating watermills along the river, but today all trade activities has disappeared. I was looking for the possibility of adjusting the scale of public space in the village. In collaboration with the local community (Interesseforeningen) the project *Streetkitchen\_Kättilsmåla* occupied a small island of private land belonging to a now-closed grocery store at the village intersection. The new owner occasionally uses the land for the storage of his machinery but gave us permission to transform his land into a common garden with edible plants for the summer. The village's residents supported the idea of creating a shared space and in collaboration all kinds of edible plants were planted and a transportable wooden kitchen was built. The owner found it strange that the idea was to bring back the notion of a common meeting place in the village, instead of just selling the plants we were growing. Meals were cooked in the garden over the summer and the physical investment energized the situation and made people interested in participating in such a way that they dreamt of cultivating the garden the following year. However, the landowner had other plans. He scraped off everything all the way down to the gravel. Today,

Kättilsmåla once again has a bare piece of land in the middle of the village, circled by the bus before it leaves the village again.

One cannot predict the consequences of ones actions when working with local communities. My intention was to have a discussion about the crossing of individual cadastral boundaries in order to increase common spaces in the village, exemplified by the piece of land in the village intersection, which was already occupied by the bus stop, the letterbox and the village's information board. Unintended *Streetkitchen\_Kättilsmåla* created a tension between several villagers who had invested time in creating the garden and the landowner, who, without any dialogue, ended the garden.

My connection to Kolkata is of a more distant character than that of Kättilsmåla. During colonial times the Danish botanist Nathaniel Wallich went off to the East Indian Company's botanical garden in Calcutta to establish what became the foundation of knowledge for the colonial trade of plants and Indian tea. On every street corner in Kolkata there are small stalls where you can buy tea served in small, handmade clay cups. Once the tea has been drunk, the cups are smashed on the ground; when the rain comes, they return to the clay from which they originated. Public spaces and private acts battle in Kolkata. On one side the public sphere restricts the possibility for private acts, and on the other side, the street literally serves as bedroom and kitchen for a massive amount of street dwellers without a physical home. The streets are not only occupied by human settlers, but also by temples, telephone junction boxes, police kiosks, electricity transformers and a very high number of street vendors. The street vendors are under constantly pressure from the authorities, who perceive the provisional stalls as chaos and disorder, disturbing the image they wish to create of Kolkata. Various operations are emptying the streets from time to time, - otherwise the provisional is tolerated with the help of bribe.

The project *Streetkitchen\_Kolkata* attempted to combine the streets' formal and informal systems into a symbiotic relationship by conquering a space on the street in front of a permanent cake shop and between illegal street vendors. To add to the gesture of smashing the clay cup - and as a tribute to the gigantic botanical project *Florica Indica* as well as reference to the exclusive Danish dinnerware *Flora Danica* - specific seeds were implanted to the traditional clay cups in collaboration with a local potter and his wife. This action created a potential random garden of edible plants. Visual artist Anja Frankes dinnerware Waste Service ([http://instantherlev.dk/?page\\_id=1034](http://instantherlev.dk/?page_id=1034)) was invited to take part in the project, because it emphasised ways of production that required the

direct participation of a local community. The knowledge behind the making of the Indian clay cup and the Danish porcelain goes back generations. By infusing the clay cups and the porcelain with new rituals and symbolic significance, the behaviour of people started to change and brought out discussion about social, political and economic aspects.

Political scientist, Chantal Mouffe defines public space as a battleground where different hegemonic projects are confronted without necessarily seeking consensus. According to Mouffe, critical artistic practices can play an important role in subverting the dominant hegemony of public space, in the constitution and upholding of a given symbolic order or in its challenging.

*The real issue concerns the possible forms of critical art, the different ways in which artistic practices can contribute to questioning the dominant hegemony. Once we accept that identities are never pre-given but that they are always the result of processes of identification, that they are discursively constructed, the question that arises is the type of identity that critical artistic practices should aim at fostering. Clearly those who advocate the creation of agonistic public spaces, where the objective is to unveil all that is repressed by the dominant consensus are going to envisage the relation between artistic practices and their public in a very different way than those whose objective is the creation of consensus, even if this consensus is seen as a critical one. According to the agonistic approach, critical art is art that foments dissensus that makes visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate. It is constituted by a manifold of artistic practices aiming at giving a voice to all those who are silenced within the framework of the existing hegemony.*

Mouffe, C. (2007)

Mouffe sees a role to play for artistic interventions that can empower situations in public space by occupying them with a disruptive energy and hereby expose the hidden contradictions of the situation.

Mouffe argues that it is important to accept the public realm as a conflict space which always involves a separation between “us” and “them”, since it is necessary with a reference to a constitutive outside for the creation of an identity. The understanding of public space as a battleground, tense with insecurities that are the consequence of the conflicts for power, brings forward the question

Figure 6.14  
Streetkitchen\_  
Kättilsmåla,  
2013 –  
preparation  
of the edible  
garden in  
the village  
intersection



Figure 6.15  
Streetkitchen\_  
Kolkata,  
2013 – An  
installation  
in front of a  
cake shop and  
between two  
street vendors,  
built as a  
mobile teahouse.



of how one deals with dissensus that can make visible what the dominant consensus tends to eliminate.

Actions can make boundaries, limitations and paradoxes visible in different situations and disturb their hierarchies. By setting up a tea stall on the pavement in Kolkata - where it is not legal to put up things, the boundaries, limitations and paradoxes of infrastructure were exposed. The fact that a great percentage of the people working in Kolkata eat their daily lunch at one of the many food stalls on the streets, make it a big challenge to create suitable circumstances for the street vendors in order for them to serve the city.

But the boundaries are located not only in the physical arrangement, but also in peoples thinking which mirrors the hierarchies of society. When blurring the physical boundaries it is no longer clear what the limits are and what is accepted. Then people need to have a dialogue. The really big challenge for a critical practice, I find, is to unveil the thinking of its public.

I sought to challenge Mouffe's description of the importance of the "us" and "them" situations in the projects in Ljubljana, Kolkata and Selde. The re-readings and adjustments of well-known local things and situations momentarily broke down the "us and them" situation - and created an "us and them and them" situation instead. Conflicting parties have their own circles with different habits, cultures and languages within the regional political context. These circles don't seem to be able to meet, but when you are not able to communicate internally, you talk to strangers. The outsider hears stories, explanations, excuses, accuses and anecdotes about the on-going conflicts, which can be used as material in the investigation

### **The use of architecture to investigate something**

Architectural interventions can indicate a path forward more than it can provide a proven recipe for a future society. This path walks through a collective learning process, aiming at empowering citizens and creating an awareness of our responsibility for the development of society.

Since every situation is different and the knowledge extracted from the actions is produced through collaboration, it is only possible to give a brief indication of how the projects emerge. Different situations need to be treated differently and therefore my relation to different publics changes. I seek to be close enough to citizens, communities, (including research communities) and authorities to discuss different standpoints in relation to questions raised in practice as well as in research.

### **Conclusion**

Earlier in my practice I had big visions of building environments that could change our perception of how we construct everyday life. I still have, but today I look at my practice as one that is mostly constructing without building physical buildings. Collaboration with large architectural offices made me realize that there is a large gap between the way buildings are designed and built and where and how these buildings are to be situated - and lived. It can be very difficult to imagine reality as it really is and in my understanding it is therefore important to deal with all the invisible and intangible forces of a situation or site. It is crucial to be able to be close to all the different actors in a given situation and learn from them. My practice mainly creates small-scale interventions, but these can drift out in the world, I believe, and get integrated in the public realm over time. In order for things to be integrated in the public realm, dialogue is needed.

The projects in "Urbanplanen" and Kolkata present a discussion of the future via collaborative interventions in public space that seek to give voice to all those who are not usually heard in the public debate.

Developing Stadium NOWHERE - as most other projects within my practice- was an education for the students and the citizens as well as for myself, because none of us really knew the outcome of the project and how the story of the stadium would be unfolded as a whole in the end.

Chantal Mouffe's theory on agonistic democracy and Rahul Mehrotra's view on city planning help me to reflect on my actions and to formulate new questions to bring out in public space. My practice seeks to challenge theory by confronting itself with the condition and realities of the world. By being present and acknowledging places, people and their skills, it has the possibilities to recognize the moments of revelation, which are the moments when everything is connected in a conscious and 'real' way despite differences. It can add to theory by working with these genuine encounters face to face with its public.



## 6.5 Character traits as creative triggers of creative practice research:

*A strategic view of personality attributes*

*Tadeja Zupančič*

This section aims to identify and discuss the challenging characteristics of people as triggers of creative practice research, especially in the PhD research training. The traits such as impatience, immoderation, pride etc. are discussed through their signs as they can be observed within the communication of the creative practice research process. Overcoming these traits is seen as the precondition for effective development of relational knowledge within the creative practice research. The purpose of these endeavours is to raise awareness of the intertwined influences deriving from the characters of people in the process of knowledge creation through creative practice research, with a view to enhancing the sensitivity of people involved and to improve their ability to trigger other's creativity not too much but just enough.

### **Characteristics of highly creative people and communities**

Some important creative triggers of creative practice research (as defined by ADAPT-r) in art, music, industrial design, architecture, urban design and other design disciplines derive from the 'unleashed mind' of venturesome practitioners, their supervisors, panellists, examiners and other creative people involved in the process. The mediation of the process may become highly complex, as creative people often have odd thoughts and behaviours and these thoughts and behaviours can either stimulate or block the creative processes. It has been argued that 'both creativity and eccentricity may be the result of genetic variations that increase cognitive disinhibition - the brain's failure to filter out extraneous information'. The motivation behind these endeavours is to try to explicate tacit knowledge from the creative process derived from its inherent stimuli of innovation. In other words: the explication process itself is a driver of creativity. An awareness of this stimulus represents a

motivation for the organizers of creative practice research training, which develops the methods of the explication mentioned. Venturesome practitioners become 'reflective', the strength of their venturesomeness increases. The ability of critical reflection is not the only result. Their ability of the new knowledge creation is even more important. This knowledge is not only explicated from what is already there in their practice, but what emerges in parallel, simultaneously, triggered by the explication of tacit knowledge. 'When unfiltered information reaches conscious awareness in the brains of people who are highly intelligent and can process this information without being overwhelmed, it may lead to exceptional insights and sensations' (Carson, 2014). The process of explication of the tacit knowledge from within the creative process brings also the awareness of the creative person's identity, including his/her specific behaviour. This raised awareness potentially leads to difficulties in the communication process. What if the brains of highly creative people cannot cope with the extra information any more? What if the stress of the consciousness becomes too strong? In any case, creative people are often oversensitive, some exposing their sensitivity, others hiding it behind the obvious mask of over-self-confidence and/or even ignorance.

What about alternative ways of creativity stimulation/triggering? Some studies in physics and neurobiology indicate one of them: using non-invasive brain stimulation (Snyder, Ellwood and Chi, 2014). The results of their studies suggest that it is possible to control the moments of great ideas: the reality is far from unexpected enlightening. 'By freeing the mind of some of its inhibitions, we might improve creative problem solving.' It can be added that creative practice research training attempts to free the mind as well. No 'transcranial magnetic brain stimulation' is involved. But the results of finished PhD's show that some simple methodological steps enable the level of predictability, high enough to guide though but not fully control the process. The examination of the character traits of the people involved can potentially add to the discussion of variety rather than single method to trigger creativity. Instead of artificially controlling the moments of great ideas we guide the conditions where the creativity is triggered through the creative practice research communication.

### **Character traits of creative practitioners-researchers as creative triggers**

When we look at the process of creative practice research through the glasses of 'character traits', we can identify the signs of timidity,

ignorance, pride, jealousy, immoderation, impatience and anger through the whole process. The 'traits' refer to the list of the 'classic' deadly sins clearly but not literally, trying to forget the 'too metaphorical' notion of the 'concept'. There is a strong need to overcome the nature of eccentricism or at least a very high level and a wide variety of over-sensitivity of the people involved in the communication process. Are the character traits drivers or triggers of creativity? Having the notion of relational knowledge in mind we can imagine the cumulative effects of individual character traits in collective settings... In the following sections, we explore the following character traits: ignorance and pride, immoderation and impatience, timidity, jealousy and anger, and finally, collective ignorance and pride. Though they are very different, some are handled together to stimulate the reader's reflection on their potential interrelations. For example, pride as the origin of ignorance, both exclusive; immoderation and impatience both as action triggers – in the mission-impossible process of finding a balance; the potential strength of the energy deriving from jealousy and/or anger, sometimes from both simultaneously...

### **Ignorance and pride**

Searching for relevance includes fighting against ignorance. Thus this character trait of individuals, which in research often flows through the whole communities, is discussed first. Some examples of ignorance have already been mentioned in the previous paragraphs.

Creative research motivation is not a gift. It requires the discipline of research training, the discipline of involvement, the discipline of periodical rethinking the reasons and identifying the feelings by the people involved. The signs of ignorance can be found in a lack of curiosity, a lack of the desire to improve, and as a consequence, a lack of knowledge or experience – including the awareness of the lack... Over-focusing to a specific aspect may also lead to ignorance of others.

There is an obvious gap between the nature of creative practice working dynamics and the periodical regularity of research training rhythm required in creative practice research. This gap is most visible in the transition period to research training. One of important issues for the supervisors is how to identify the time-related balance for an individual practitioner-researcher and establish an appropriate rhythm for effective research progress while the creative practice continues. Ignorance of these aspects can endanger the

effectiveness of whole training process.

I would like to refer back to the example of the PhD presentation when I missed the message completely because of the visual interface I didn't like. I was shocked when I realized my own passive ignorance I was not aware of, and which was not intended – though I was convinced there was no pre-justice involved. Hearing the comment that 'Some candidates are simply better than others' made me think that a person with a finished PhD should be able to communicate their research findings to others in spite of the fact that they may dislike their artistic creations. The question remains, who represents the public which need to understand that message. Is this the community of creative practice researchers? Or a wider or smaller audience? Is it necessary to address or at least invite the general public, like in the case of Tom Holbrook's public examination in Ghent (April 1014)? What is the message of ignorance when even the majority of the creative practice community attendees are ignored, and the 'food' of the PhD results is 'served' to the examiners only? I must admit that I felt ignored within the public, observing some visual material being presented, not hearing anything though sitting not too far away, while C.J. Lim 'served' his 'food' in Barcelona (November 2013). The later discussion about the scenario behind the event, deriving from his research ideas, didn't really change my feelings as a consequence of being ignored. I still think that the new insights need to be shared fully – at least what is shareable. Why should we 'reinvent hot water' again and again?

Ignorance, subconscious or intentional, is often an obstacle to creativity. Similar it works in the creative discourse, as it may block the energy flows, needed for creative actions. It may also block the initial stages of the process of creative practice excellence recognition. On the other hand, ignorance can be seen as a quality when it allows for new developments.

From the point of view of the creative practice research relevance, having the idea of the relational knowledge in mind, we can observe ignorance not only as an individual character trait but also as a characteristic of specific communities, ignoring each other.

Hesitating to ask for help or supervision is a clear sign of pride, resulting potentially in long periods without essential research progress. Blaming others when plans and/or wishes are not fulfilled, is one of the most obvious signs. Supervisors blame their candidates' ability, the candidates blame the panellists and examiners... Lack of looking beyond your own limits is related to lack of respect to others. This reflects in difficulties in recognition of the

achievements of others.

I find it sometimes difficult to explain the potentially negative critique to PhD candidates when the level of work quality is far below the minimum quality requirements and expectations. Because it often seems they are not able to understand it at all. In other words: being able to understand the situation the critique like that would not be even necessary. On the other hand this is because criticism is taken too seriously and too literally, even personally, in the socio-cultural context I'm coming from. Is it my pride, which prevents me to explain properly? I'm a supervisor recognized by my institutional and inter-institutional context - isn't that enough? Is it the pride of the candidate that blocks the communication flow? S/he is a 'venturous practitioner' already, recognized by the peers of the artistic community, isn't that enough? Probably I should ask myself: Is the criticism expressed carefully enough, taking the potential cultural differences of criticism acceptance conventions into account? How to detect/identify these differences? After all, are the positive elements of the critique balancing the overall picture and how? Is the way out of the situation indicated and how?

Conscious self-criticism helps in identification of pride, and leads to healthy self-confidence. Pride can be seen as a barrier to creativity, as it doesn't stimulate the desire of constant improvement. It can lead to ignorance, individual of collective... as it prevents people to immerse into the ideas and knowledge of others. Controlled self-confidence can work positively in many cases, for instance, when we need to respect some research principles we believe in - though others recommend differently.

### **Immoderation and impatience**

I discussed the issue of the character traits as potential drivers/triggers of creativity with Rosanne van Klaveren, one of the already mentioned ADAPT-r fellows. I'm interested in her creative practice in particular because she is dealing with public participation in arts while my own personal creative practice research is often related to public participation in urban design. She finds immoderation the key driver of her work with general public and ignorance as the key obstacle. Her immoderation motivates people to join her artistic projects, while she feels her potential ignorance of the people's needs would cause a disaster to any of her projects. In a way, she as an artist feels ignored by her 'scientific' institutional context, but she cannot ignore its influence. It can be argued that her positive immoderation derives at least partially from these conditions she needs to cope with.

Immoderation in research framing (over-referencing, over-modelling etc.) blocks the creative processes. On the other side a 'controlled dose' of immoderation in the desire to acquire new insights can be very stimulating. As long as it keeps us in positive stress.

Immoderation and impatience are close to each other in this context. Immoderation can lead to impatience, when the person becomes nervous, for example. The signs of impatience can be observed when the practitioner rushes to the next research phase without a clear picture of the previous one, to achieve the most important PhD trigger, that leads to the 'PhD moment' itself as soon as possible. When he/she doesn't really understand the slow-mode of the research reflection, regardless to the nature of the creative practice research. The signs of impatience occur when the practitioner finds others already achieving some 'touchable' results, and they become increasingly jealous of their friend's success. The same can be said about the panellists/peers and supervisors: when they see other supervisors are able to ask more focused or more comprehensive questions than themselves. The 'shortcuts', signs of impatience, are usually quite obvious: lack of in-depth investigation, lack of overview.

Looking back to the process is inherent to the creative practice research 'model' discussed - back to the creative body of work, but also back to the period of the research mode. It is a wonderful opportunity to overcome impatience: looking back for half a year, a year or more, especially into the process of the research mode, offers the overview of the changes in the way of thinking, the level of awareness of the knowledge within the process, etc.

### **Timidity**

The signs of timidity can be observed in the transition training process, where the venturous practitioners hesitate to 'enter' the process. I regularly meet a potential PhD candidate who prefers private critical discussions about his design practice than entering the process where the public moment is involved as one of the key potentials of sharing and exchanging knowledge and experience. Simply because he is too timid to expose himself, afraid to become too vulnerable. One of the selected candidates for the ADAPT-r fellowship in Ljubljana, Ralf Looke, for instance, used plural for the explanations of his case study practice during the PRS-s he attended. Though proud of the ten years of the wonderful success of his architectural office he remained hidden behind the mask of the collective, without exposing his own individual role in the process. When I asked him about the reasons behind he answered that he is too new and absolutely not experienced within the research



community, in spite of his obvious ability to dig deeply into his design practice, recognized by the same creative practice research community.

Timidity can often be identified in hesitation. It may originate in deep thinking. In the Ralf's case hesitation culminated in his decision not to continue his research explorations within the ADAPT-r community. Nevertheless his experience of creative practice approach is very positive and I'm sure his creative practice has already been refreshed, though not to the extent of the full potential, which derives from the finalized creative research-training program.

Hesitating to change the supervisor when the communication doesn't work can be a sign of fear to harm the people involved. Highly creative people might be over-sensitive on one hand, prone to stress, because of being full of fear against public performance and discussion. Fear of failure and/or being seen as strange are among the strongest. This relates to all, reflective practitioners, panellists, supervisors and examiners; though the last share experience of the ways to overcome the difficulties. For example: a panellist may not ask anything to avoid asking stupid questions because of the feeling he/she is not familiar with the context yet. (I was definitely one of those when I entered the 'creative practice research' community.) Having in mind that the view from 'outside' is always needed would perhaps encourage him/her... However, practicing gradually what you are afraid of is often the best way to overcome the fears - the actions become 'normal' when we accept them into our everydayness. Not only the skill of presenting in public but the familiarity with the process helps. Waiting for the next PRS is thus not the best option for people lacking their self-assurance - the more frequent a similar/comparable practice is, the more likely is that at the next PRS is not problematic from this point of view any more.

Increased productivity is, in some cases, a clear sign of raised level of timidity, deriving from circumstances of challenged security. At the first level this can be seen as a driver of creativity, but there is the second level of insecurity, which may block the creative process, when the concerns of the creative practitioner are re-focused to satisfy the basic needs of survival. I observed this process at 'my' institution during the rising economic crisis in my country in the last couple of years.

The discussion about the strength deriving from oral public discussions as opportunities to share the experience, to transfer the tacit knowledge to its explicit mode, including the knowledge of

the evaluation or supervision process, is helpful in many cases.

The practitioner's patience within the practice based research process is usually awarded by the so-called 'PhD moment', when the picture of the wholeness of the research becomes clear and/or when the early stage researcher feels/knows his/her higher level of expertise is achieved. Raised self-confidence of the practitioner, as well as of his/her supervisor(-s), is a clear sign that this moment is triggered.

Timidity in itself is a weak driver of creativity, unless it is accompanied with a strong desire for improvement at any level. In some cases timidity becomes a trigger of creativity: for example in the individual creative processes. Certainly not in the development of relational knowledge. Because timid people feel better in their intimate worlds than in the confrontation with others. In order to enhance the relational knowledge creation, strong ongoing creative triggers are needed for timid people: the first one to decide to enter a larger group of a research community, the second one to expose oneself within that community.

### Jealousy and anger

Jealousy and anger are already reported as drivers of creativity (Blythe and van Schaik, 2013). The signs of jealousy can be traced in the clear signs of anger, especially when not controlled in the communication with other people. Leon van Schaik mentions the example of the painter Andrea del Castagno, as described by Giorgio Vasari. Andrea stabbed his rival Domenico Veneziano in the moment when anger challenged his jealous position. Jealousy can also be hidden in the signs of impatience. Creative people often want to 'jump' not only to the next stage of their potential achievements but also beyond their limits and especially beyond the limits of their rivals or/and models. It is quite difficult to identify the signs of 'pure' jealousy, as they are often even not explicit. Nevertheless, they can be observed in the process of creative discussions, in the moments of blocked communication.

Is it necessary to overcome jealousy if it is an important driver of creativity? No, in principle, in the case the energy is transformed into the art or design creation directly. Yes, in the case of creative practice research, as communication between people is seen as an important driver as well. As long as the strength of jealousy does not block the communication process. There is a moment when jealousy is strong enough to stimulate creative action: it then is a creative trigger.

Anger means also danger in the creative process. All anger

cannot be transformed into the creative action and this may reflect in discussions far from the basic idea of civilization... People lacking the ability to redirect the destructive forces of anger while communicating with others need to review the potentials of their creative actions, especially during their first moments of anger.

I would like to describe here one of my recent experiences of the dynamics of anger challenges both as a driver and an obstacle of creative research communication. All, experienced researchers, PhD candidates and diverse professionals were involved in the EU SEE project called ATRIUM (2015). The project ATRIUM – Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th century in Urban Management – developed a new European cultural route from abandoned and problematic places, more or less intensively associated with the diverse notions of totalitarian regimes of the 20th century in the South-Eastern Europe. During the discussion about the choice of the project background, the collaborators from 18 partners/11 countries were digging into the collective memory of their diverse cultural contexts. Not being aware of the strength of this memory we become angry because of the diversity of interpretations – and fear that people use masks to achieve their political agenda – we faced in the discussion. The driving force of anger was stimulating to the point when the discussion focused to the decision about the project logo. How to define a single symbol for such a variety of problematic potentials, suspicions etc. – in the minds of people? This was not a problem of just a single individual within the discussion – many people from the consortium were ‘affected’. The passions became so strong at that point that some of the 18 partners expressed their intention to leave the project. This expression was obviously strong enough to calm down the situation, and the strength of anger re-culminated only later, before the decision about the historic background interpretation, acceptable for the majority. This second peak was easier to handle because people learned about how (not) to communicate with each other from their previous experience. But the second culmination problem solving didn’t prevent the third one to occur – during the definition of the approach acceptable to renew the most challenging and potentially questionable memory-holders as remains of the problematic periods. Even the fourth stressful situation happened: during selecting the seat of the association running the European cultural route dealing with cultural tourism to enable the survival of more or less problematic remains of the past. This last time anger affected less people and the discussion was blocked for a shorter period than in the previous three critical moments of collaboration. We were

lucky that reasoning was stronger than passion after the first and most critical communication block. The communication breaks due to anger were cancelled as soon as we were able to control anger during our discourse. The cultural route certificate by the Council of Europe was finally awarded and the platform is ready for further discussion learning – for the general public.

There is an important difference in the source of anger in comparison with other character traits. Research results tell us that ‘human emotions principally stem from the right side of the brain, yet anger is controlled by the more logical left side, indicating that in some way, the anger emotion can be more controlled than other emotions’ (McGilchrist, 2009). Obviously there is a good chance of a reasoning based control in the creative practice research discourses where/when anger predominates – of course in the case we are aware of the potential problems deriving from not controlled anger, and aware we perhaps need a stronger level of control than others. This is also useful when, in communication, we detect uncontrolled anger in others.

### **The awareness of the character traits as a challenge for a critical reflection**

The character traits of highly creative people and communities are in many cases very important triggers of creativity. On the other hand they may also block or limit the creative process. The most challenging limitations of creativity derive from not controlling the majority of the character traits. Identification and sensitive response to the fragile moments and critical levels when/where the drivers of creativity become the destructive limitations of the same process – when their force cannot be used as a creative trigger – is the key to enhance the creative practice research process.

It is difficult and not necessarily productive to literary isolate the signs or/and effects of individual character trait mentioned, as obviously they are often interlinked with each other simultaneously, such as jealousy and anger, ignorance and pride, timidity and ignorance, jealousy and immoderation. On the other hand ignorance and impatience are rarely interplayed. Not all the character traits discussed are relevant for all the people and processes involved in the creative practice research relational knowledge development. This also depends on the nature of creative practice involved. Last but not least, the roles of people change in the process. And their individual moments when their character traits become creative triggers not always culminate into collective behaviour. Any character traits-listing should not be over-simplified and over-categorized.

Nevertheless, the awareness of all of them as an interface from critical reflection is potentially helpful to avoid the culminating effects of the most important traits when not desired or in the case these effects are so strong that the drivers and/or triggers of creativity are transformed into the obstacles of the process. This moment is important in particular for managers and supervisors of the creative practice research and research training, because it can raise their sensitivity and ability to improve the creative practice research conditions.

### Strategy for creative practice research relevance

Relevance of research results can be seen as a balance of knowledge type/contents and communication/dissemination modes: both need to be close enough to people/communities to be understood, and at the same time far enough to challenge curiosity/creativity. In the process of the relevance searching the character traits of the people involved should be taken into account seriously.

As creative practice research results are culturally rooted and the knowledge type is relational, the researcher's sensitivity of how to navigate through the potential communities of relevance is required. Learning how to identify the creative triggers arising from public behaviours is the first step to enhance this sensitivity. An example of a sensitive navigation through the local, regional and trans-regional contexts of the community of practice can be found in this present book, in the writing about spatial contexts and relational design process by Siv Helene Stangenland. The next step is to broaden the horizon to the communities of relevance. Not only the 'creativity within specific cultures of place' (see Anna Holder's chapter within this book) but also the sources of affinities with the 'specific' become important. Why are we actually interested in this or that specific knowledge creation? Who else and why is potentially interested in these things? How can we reach these people?

This is the initial list of questions for further investigations:

- What is the narrowest context, which can be still identified as a context of relevance?
- What is the widest or the most general level of relevance that can be reached from the knowledge from creative practice research - in individual cases, in the cases of diverse creative practice research communities?
- How to overcome pride, combined with ignorance, and use impatience, immoderation and perhaps even anger

and jealousy to control pride, to achieve self-confidence without ignorance in creative practice research?

### Conclusions/summary

The three different lenses used in this chapter, the strategic, the theoretical and the action focused, can be seen as a hybrid method of collective investigation of creative triggers, that derive from public behaviour of creative practitioners. Each of the lenses is represented by an active voice from the ADAPT-r project. These voices trigger each other; each contribution depends on the other two; on many others in fact....

The chapter itself identifies and exposes the three voices involved, to demonstrate the relational knowledge creation from creative practices, as described by the theory focused voice of the experienced researcher. The triangular structure of the chapter is reflected in the triangle of the knowledge types discussed. The theoretical context of this book is complementary: while Eli Hatleskog in this chapter discusses the conversation of people involved in the process, Claus Peder Pedersen and Anna Holder, for instance, in another chapter, focus to the places for creativity. Another theoretical example in this book is the generalisation of the basic terms to the glossary level (Richard Blythe and Marcelo Stamm) and the editorial endeavour to contribute the wider knowledge base on creativity (Johan Verbeke)

The action view challenges the theories of others by confronting itself with the condition and realities of the world. Thus it builds its own theory. It's contextualisation is action-focused, specific. This view-type can be found in several other writings in this book as well (the 'modest challenge' of Karli Luik, the 'togetherness' of Rosanne van Klaveren...)

The strategic view is concerned with more general orientations and concerns - leading to the awareness of the diversity of creative practice research relevance levels and the diversity of the people involved within the research investigations. It shows the importance of the contextual relations of individuals and communities; and it focuses on the importance the character traits of these people play in the relational knowledge creation. There are some other 'strategic' writings in this book: for instance one with a perspective view to the conditions and sentiments from the contexts for creativity though strongly focused to the local conditions (Sally Stewart). Or the one about the politicality of creative practices (Veronika Valk). Last but not least, even the personal openness and generosity can become strategic, as they sound from the words of Ranulf Glanville



in this (and many other) books.

All the three views indicate the importance of searching for balance in creative practice research, not only the balance of sometimes seemingly opposite dualities, but searching for the third view/element/situation that triggers integral thinking. The interview between Jo Van Den Berghe and Jeroen D'hoë in this book indicates how it is possible to use triangularity (of space, tools and people in this case...) to develop theoretical thinking (about 'the fruitful break', for instance) and to explicate the strategic positions (doing it 'authentic way') within the creative discussion.

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# Chapter 7 Creative Practice Research Glossary

*Richard Blythe and Marcelo Stamm*



Scaffolding terms in use in the ADAPT-r grant framework have emerged organically from the practice based research paradigm and are terms that were in current use (Public Behaviours, Community of Practice), or which were coined specifically for the ADAPT-r grant (Transformative Triggers, Case Studies, Explication of Tacit Knowledge and of Methods). Either way such scaffolding terms have grown from observations of Creative Practice Research in action for the purposes of exposing gaps in the researcher's description of a practice and the practice itself, for situating the research in relation to the domain, and for identifying ascension moments in a practice. The set of terms is neither absolute nor closed. The domain of creative practice research is thus not unified by generic and objectified methods of investigation, but rather defined by highly context-dependent, situated, singular and concrete approaches which nonetheless benefit from forms of scaffolding which also provide a common point of reference.

The glossary terms that appear in this chapter form part of a larger project to create an on-line glossary of terms used across the community engaged in practice based research. The glossary is built from many contributions and the on-line version is open to submissions from the wider community. These will be edited and acknowledged with full attribution to authors and their institutional affiliation. The on-line glossary can be accessed at *creative-practiceresearch.info*. The glossary is undertaken under the auspices of the EU Marie Curie ADAPT-r grant and therefore the terms covered in this chapter are focussed on the terms used to describe the key work packages of ADAPT-r and key terms that have emerged during the implementation of the grant.

### 'Case Studies' in Creative Practice Research

The term 'case study' in practice-based research refers to an individual practitioner's *comprehensive research* into his practice: each practitioner as such represents a singular *case study*. Every case study consists of a spectrum of interrogations and engages in a variety of research perspectives. [see CPR Glossary entry: *Explanation of methods*]

A basic premise of practice-based research is that each *case study* is highly distinctive and necessarily individualised as the result of the principle of the *primacy of practice* which represents the *laboratory* [see CPR Glossary entry: *Practice Laboratory*] where the researching practitioner makes specific observations through 'reflection on', 'reflection in' and 'reflection for' his specific body of work

and practice. [see CPR Glossary entry: *Reflection on/in/for*]. The specificity and *singularity* of the case study in question must not be misinterpreted as suggesting a purely *subjective nature* of the *case* under scrutiny. It is by virtue of the situated, concrete, embodied and materialised nature of practice that observations are made that can be shared as they can be *shown* and used as communal points of reference by different researchers.

The notion of the practitioner's individual *case study* can be related to the idea of three *orders of knowledge* that can be distinguished with regard to the way a practitioner can contextualise his work: Specific select projects, potentially grouped under certain research relevant perspectives (*1<sup>st</sup> order of knowledge*) can be contextualised within the full body of work of the practitioner, so that e.g. transformations and shifts in the practice may become apparent (*2<sup>nd</sup> order of knowledge*). In a transversal perspective, the individual *case study* of one practitioner may then be differentiated and positioned within a field of parallel, adjacent or contrasting other *case studies* (*3<sup>rd</sup> order of knowledge*) [see CPR Glossary entry: *Positioning the Research*], [see CPR Glossary entry: *Differentiation*]. Such a *horizontal* comparative engagement with the different *case studies* provided each by a different practitioner goes beyond the principle of practice-based research which focuses on the practitioners own practice as the realm of inquiry - however, the researcher that positions his *case study* in the context of a relevant *community of practice* does treat these adjacent practices as *case studies*, albeit not as platforms for research. These three orders do not work in hierarchical ways. A 1<sup>st</sup> order discovery made in the realisation of a project may cause a shift in practice (3<sup>rd</sup> order) *per se*. Similarly the differentiation of one practice within a community of peers may produce project specific outcomes.

Rana Haddad and Pascal Hachem (*"Fly the Bullet". Chronology of Beirut, how it made us and defined our work*, presented at the *Making Research Researching Making* Conference, Aarhus September 2015) presented a series of poetic projects which revealed a tacit potential for new futures within an existing oppressive condition. These projects collectively describe a ground of experimentation with a clear intentionality and provided an excellent overview of key works of a practice. The presentation gave insights into the ways in which this practice and the projects had been shaped by their political context and gave hints of collaborations and exchanges within a wider community of practice. The projects refer to the ways in which the history of Beirut 'creates an overwhelming sense of unpredictability, leaving citizens no choice but to live on a day to day basis' and

they respond to the city as a ready-made seeking out with optimism the potential latent in a dangerous situation. Architecturally they respond by making small projects, ‘mobile architecture’. One such project, a giant mobile ear piece, addressed full-frontal the insidious practices of political ‘listening in’. In doing so they provide a case study of the ways in which architecture can activate positive futures in the most difficult political circumstances through the production of evocative and poetic ‘micro’ projects that crack open the surface of the ‘found’ condition, in this case by presenting it back to itself, to reveal other poetic possibilities. In this sense the work of these practitioners has resonance with the festival installation work in Tallinn by *Veronika Valk*. The case study describes: the designed objects; the motivations, urges and fascinations of the collaborative practice in which they were created; techniques of practice; and the multi-layered contexts within which they operate [see CPR Glossary entry: (*Explication of*) *Tacit Knowledge*].

**Related terms in Creative Practice Research:** *orders of knowledge, communities of practice, knowledge embodied in singularities, evidencing through the case, holistic nature of creative practice research, case studies as contributions to knowledge*

### **‘Communities of Practice’ in Creative Practice Research**

The investigations of a practitioner’s *community of practice* in practice-based research serves a two-fold purpose: to contextualise and *position* an individual research *case study* within a realm of practices for which the findings and outcomes of the research in question may have relevance and impact, but also in order to *reference* the practice into adjacent practices that may exhibit different degrees of *influence* on the practice under scrutiny. [see CPR Glossary entry: Contribution to Knowledge].

The delineation of one’s *community of practice* is thus on the one hand akin to a comprehensive *literature review* in non-practice based research: The researcher has to *situate* the practice within a field of practitioners who may share a research interest, specific ways of practicing and interrogating through practice. In equivalence to the literature review, the ‘community of practice’ captures the *status quo* of the research in the field and *identifies* key contributions through practice research: the practitioner *positions* their own particular research contribution by means of referencing into the relevant *practice-based research field*. Due also to the *critical* nature of situating the research in the field, the notion of ‘community

of practice’ is an *instrumental term* that allows the researcher to potentially *differentiate* one’s own research from that of seemingly neighbouring peers: divergence and dissent become as important as possible confluences and resonances [see CPR Glossary entry: *Differentiation*]. The practice which is conducted in research mode [see CPR Glossary entry: *Research Mode of Practice*] may conceive a community of practice also as a critical ‘*community of inquiry*’.

Given the instrumental nature of the notion of ‘communities of practice’ within creative practice research, the researcher has to define the specific function of the concrete community analysis and *select* tokens that strategically serve the ‘research argument’ rather than aim at exhaustive referencing in a formulaic exercise. By the same token, communities of practice are not to be conceived as a static stock of backdrop practices, but rather as highly dynamic and varied to the point where the researcher may attribute different communities of practice to different individual projects with the body of work under investigation in the *case study* [see CPR Glossary entry: Case Study]: as shifts in tranches of work may be interrogated, the community of practice and hence the community of inquiry may shift as well based on new perspectives and priorities for the research into the practice.

‘Communities of practice’ may be also understood in a narrow sense as the aggregation of *contributors* that might play a role in the production of a piece of work by way of direct collaborating with the practitioner undertaking the research also into these contributing agents. In this sense the community of practice is defined by those others whom become essential in the functioning of the practice in its response to particular project equations. The relational aspects help to articulate also the process and social aspects of practice pointing to the contingencies and interdependencies at play in the various enchainments of the practice. Articulation of these communities and their enchainments assists the researcher in more precisely structuring them and provides a curatorial tool for further developing effective public behaviours.

*Belinda Winkler* developed a better understanding of the concept of Communities of Practice after her supervisor explained it in terms of the voice (of her peers and collaborators) on her shoulder that speaks to her as she works. This self-talk, although an individual phenomenon, is nevertheless an internal conversation with peers and collaborators, and sometimes challengers extending the social aspects of community also to individual thinking.

**Related terms in Creative Practice Research:**  
*communities of inquiry, public behaviours, enchainments,*

*positioning the research, differentiating & differentiation, heroes and critics, shedding 'stock authorities', collaborations, disciplinary boundaries of one's community of practice, criteria for inclusion and exclusion of members of a community of practice, historic communities, virtual vs actual communities of practice, communities of practice 'at a distance'*

### **'Explanation of Methods' in Creative Practice Research**

Practice-based research cannot draw upon a received and sanctioned set of research 'methods': the term, while it suggests that some such repertoire of methods may be available, is therefore contested: Practitioners sometimes prefer to talk about individual research *strategies* and specific *research tactics* on the intentional side (e.g. 'mapping', 'categorizing') [see CPR Glossary entry: *Research Strategies*] and to particular *research techniques* on the operative side (e.g. 'drawing', 'diagramming', 'videoing' etc.) [see CPR Glossary entry: *Research Techniques*]

It is a basic premise of *design practice research* that each practitioner has to develop and test a distinctive individual range of ways to conduct the research. While there may be common and shared perspectives and useful lenses (or temporary scaffolding) that suggest themselves within the practice-based paradigm, e.g. positioning the research by investigating a *community of practice* [see CPR Glossary entry: *Communities of Practice*] or identifying *transformative triggers* that may account for shifts and re-orientations in practice, [see CPR Glossary entry: *Transformative Triggers*], or investigating the *urges* and *fascinations* that push and pull on the trajectory of a practice, [see CPR Glossary entry: *urges* and *fascinations*] each researcher will have to develop and explore an individual methodological *take* on how to investigate these possible research perspectives. Different directions and foci of *reflection* [see CPR Glossary entry: *Reflection on, Reflection in, Reflection for*] warrant different ways of conducting such diverse reflections, e.g. 'taking stock' of the *body of work* through collections of models, drawings or project histories in *reflection on* past practice, in contrast to *techniques* for capturing, documenting and taking research relevant footage of ongoing practice (see: *reflection in(to)*), and different from diverse speculative fore-sight reflections into a future practice (see: '*reflection for*').

Scaffolding terms in use in the ADAPTr grant framework have emerged organically from the practice based research paradigm and are terms that were in current use (Public Behaviours, Community

of Practice), or which were coined specifically for the ADAPTr grant (Transformative Triggers, Case Studies, Explication of Tacit Knowledge and of Methods). Either way such scaffolding terms have grown from observations of CPR in action for the purposes of exposing gaps in the researcher's description of a practice and the practice itself, for situating the research in relation to the domain, and for identifying ascension moments in a practice. The set of terms is neither absolute nor closed. The domain of creative practice research is thus not unified by generic and objectified methods of investigation, but rather *defined* by highly context-dependent, situated, singular and concrete approaches which nonetheless benefit from forms of scaffolding which also provide a common point of reference. To capture, document, critically reflect upon, test and discuss these individualized methodological accounts in each practice as case studies [see CPR Glossary entry: *Case Studies*] must be understood and leveraged by the researcher as a crucial component of the researcher's *contribution to the knowledge* in the field of research [see CPR Glossary entry: *Research Contribution*].

Methodological approaches are individualized through the application of techniques that have been developed within the ecology of the specific practice and specific to the discipline. For example Cathy Gale (*The Multiplicities of X* presented at the *Making Research Researching Making* Conference, Aarhus September 2015) demonstrated the ways in which the techniques of graphic design were used as powerful methods of researching the phenomenon of 'x' in graphic culture. For his Phd exhibition *Arnaud Hendrickx* created an installation which included a polystyrene raked theatre to house the audience during the examination. His is a practice of installations one of which was also a polystyrene theatre, and this theatre piece was both a work in its own right and part of the method of communicating the research.

The advancement of the discipline through the *explanation of methods* depends not on imitation, repetition and literal transfer of methods in formulaic patterns (it is unlikely that the construction of a polystyrene theatre would be a useful strategy for any other practice), but on ongoing adaptation, mutation and recasting of approaches as they are explained and explicated in their dependency on new research contexts and projects. The specific adequacy of a method, its relevance and yield are then *understood* by the fellow practitioner as belonging to a specific practice and interrogation. It is only by *virtue* of methodological explicitness at this level of specificity that 'methods' in creative practice research can claim a *second order transferability* and *objectivity*. [see CPR Glossary entry:



Research Transfer] ; [see CPR Glossary entry: *Objectivity vs. Subjectivity in Research*].

In the same way as a case study may mature to the point where the practitioner's highly individual and authentic *voice* emerges and generic jargon and abstract discourse recede, an *authentic mode of researching* emerges as a genuine research achievement in its own right.

**Related terms in Creative Practice Research:** *objectivity vs subjectivity, experimental method, repeatability, sharing and generality, extraction techniques, research scaffold, pipetting, saying/showing distinction, evidencing claims, seeking peer recognition, public behaviours*

### 'Public Behaviours' in Creative Practice Research

The types of 'public behaviours' under investigation fall loosely into two categories: the public behaviours associated with a venturesome practice at large and those more closely related to the *research mode* of the practice. [see CPR Glossary entry: *Practice in Research Mode*] The term originates in close observation of the '*natural history*' of the creative individual in general who seeks rhapsodic exposure to *public* scrutiny and validation of the quality and innovative nature of the practice, but then retreats again into the non-public sphere of the individual practice laboratory where new observations and discoveries are made [see CPR Glossary entry: *Practice as Laboratory*] which may innovate and transform the practice afresh. [see CPR Glossary entry: *Transformative Triggers*]

Such *public behaviour* follows a repeated pattern and propensity to *seek recognition* of claims and perceived achievements of a venturesome practice in a public realm marked by varying degrees of distance of *peer reviewers*, ranging from a sphere of immediate peers, e.g. possibly belonging to the practitioner's *community of practice* [see CPR Glossary entry: *Communities of Practice*], to distant peers and critics, including those who do not engage in the same practice mode of interrogation, to the critical appraisal of a disciplinary and professional discourse at large. Public 'practice behaviour' platforms include actual and concrete realms of exposure such as client relations, exhibition, competition and award *fora*, but can also consist in *virtual fora* such as new social media or communities 'at a distance'.

The notion of 'public behaviours' in practice-based *research terms* is closely linked to the idea of *exteriorising* implicit knowledge [see CPR Glossary entry: *Tacit Knowledge*] and *sharing, testing,*

*contextualising, differentiating* and *positioning* observations and insights which have research relevance. It also forms part of a *dissemination practice* integral to the *integrated scholarship model*. Specific *fora* for *public 'research behaviour'* include the two-yearly *Practice Research Symposium (PRS)* with deliberately *ritualised* processes and formats of engagement by *review panels* and a formalised *examination* process for practice-based research conducted at doctoral level (PhD), but also the standard peer review process associated with research publication outlets. In contrast with the orthodoxies of traditional 'research discourse' and 'disciplinary *public jargon*' based on *sanctioned terminologies*, the specific mode of *public exposure* of the practitioner in practice-based model may entail a mature, sophisticated and authentic singular *voice* and research methodology developed in the course of the research. [see CPR Glossary entries: *Voice & Explanation of Methods*]

A specific sense of 'public' behaviour is linked to the idea of the practitioner's *enchainments*: creative and innovative achievements can be traced back to specific forms of *constellational engagement* of the practitioner with other individuals and external positions; such an engagement in turn depends of the practitioner's *capacity to constellate* – i.e. to be able to operate in *public modes* beyond the stereotypes of the highly secluded and solitary endeavour of the creative individual. [see CPR Glossary entry: *Constellating & Constellational Conditions of Creativity*].

Public behaviours are understood in terms of their generative functionality for practice. For example architect *Steve Larkin* has mapped out in his research the generative relationship of his practice as a musician illustrating how his enchainments within the cultures of traditional Irish music are integral to his spatial intelligence and the manner in which he engages with architectural projects. A significant number of researchers point to the value of studio teaching in which they find that exposing the practice through teaching is another technique of exposing gaps in the practice which can lead to moments of transformation for the practice.

*Gillian Lambert* (*Live Projects as Research* presented at the *Making Research Researching Making* Conference, Aarhus September 2015) explained how she had chosen to position her practice outside of normal commercial approaches in order to realise a certain value that she experienced in Romania in which the making of the architecture was fully embedded in the process of constructing the building. She referred also to architects who situated themselves on the building site as part of their process and demonstrated how she had 'extracted' from her experience an approach that she used

in the making of the Wellcome Institute Reading Room. (See also Transformative Triggers)

Sophie Read (*Making Architectural History* presented at the Making Research Researching Making Conference, Aarhus September 2015) gave a detailed historical account of John Soane's lectures pointing to the performative aspects of the relationship between drawings and speech. She illustrated how Soane used lecturing as part of his practice of architecture suggesting that the public behaviour of lecturing was formative.

**Related terms in Creative Practice Research:** *positioning the research, differentiating & differentiation, contribution to the discipline/field of research/knowledge, professionalization around wrong body of knowledge, innovation of discipline, validation of research outcomes, testing, dissemination, integrated scholarship*

### 'Tacit Knowledge' in Creative Practice Research

The basic premise of *design practice research* is to exteriorise, make explicit and voice research knowledge which is per default *interiorised, implicit and tacit* in ongoing design practice. The prime methodical aim of this form of research is to release the 'sealed cognitive research capital' in established and successful creative practice and bring the tacit to the *awareness* of the otherwise 'taciturn' practitioner [see CPR Glossary entry: *Awareness*]. From the vantage point of awareness and *deliberateness*, the practitioner may *leverage* tacit knowledge into *deliberate* action once it has been explicated and its *value* appreciated. Such knowledge can then also be *shared* and investigated further. Specific 'communities of practice' may be unified through shared silent knowledge and the implicit specific *value* its members attribute to it [see CPR Glossary entry: *Communities of Practice*].

The notion of *tacit knowledge* points towards dimensions of something 'known' but not articulated, as well as to specific modes of 'knowing' akin to 'experiential knowledge' and 'operational knowledge' that can be shown, exhibited and *demonstrated*, rather than made explicit in discursive and conceptual ways. The practitioner thus may also explore individual forms of explicating modes of 'knowing how' rather than 'knowing that'. The practitioner observes herself as operating on the basis of knowledge dimensions and resources that are not or *cannot* all be at the same level of articulation. The sister notion of 'embodied knowledge' also points at 'material knowledge' and materiality and the body as 'sites of

knowledge' in the wake of understanding thinking as potentially *material* and intelligence embodied in morphology and materiality rather than dependent on a conceptual realm.

Practice-based research understands that there is no singular realm of 'tacit knowledge', but that the 'tacit' relates to diverse layers and dimensions of the *unspoken*, including what the practitioner takes for *granted* or regards as *trivial*. To *foreground, uncover, expose, unfold and extract* what is otherwise *neglected, covered up, avoided or compacted* can take the form of a (self-)critical engagement with what is *wrongly assumed*, with unreflected presuppositions and pre-conceptions, hidden premises, (cognitive) biases [see CPR Glossary entry: *Biases*] operational routines and 'thinking styles'. Under the critical lens, the *tacit* points towards a disjunct between what the practitioner (sometimes mistakenly) perceives *prima facie* as central to the practice and what may be operative *in the background*; tacit knowledge analysis may thus help to debunk myths regarding the principles of operation in a practice.

For example, Alice Casey describes how in her first PRS presentation the panel responded that TAKA's works were *not* vernacular as they had claimed. This was a shock to them which enabled them to reimagine the intentionality line of their research. Alice also describes how her supervisor pointed to claims of 'honesty in the use of materials' and the inconsistency between that claim and their actual treatment of different kinds of material. This resulted in an increased awareness and more precise dealing with material allowing the practice to escape received dogmas and an increased freedom in the manner in which material could be approached. Both examples point to a gap between the practitioner's description of the practice and the practice itself which is another way of identifying what is tacit in a practice.

Utilising a constructive lens, to investigate the *tacit background* of a practice can include an analysis of the practitioner's *spatial intelligence* in the case of an architectural practice [see CPR Glossary entry: *Spatial Intelligence*], but more broadly also the roots of the practitioner's *fascinations* [see CPR Glossary entry: *Fascinations*], the *urges* that are associated with such fascinations [see CPR Glossary entry: *Urges*], as well as (hidden) value-propositions and value-systems that inform the practice.

*Jo van den Berghe* recognised in his research that the ghost of his grandmother's house, its spaces and materiality, haunted his practice. He then through drawing and model making, techniques of his practice, extracted this previously hidden spatiality thus revealing how a tacit spatial knowledge had informed his practice

and then, having revealed this enabled him to work with precision and insight.

Practice-based research understands the engagement with *tacit knowledge* not as one-directional - from the implicit to explicit - but always as bi-directional: a practice may seek to fold back explicated knowledge into operational, intuitive and tacit knowledge, *re-anchor* the deliberate sphere in the *tacit dimension* as a way of enriching the practice's responsive capacity to an actual design situation.

That engagement may also be with the tacit dimensions of a project rather than specifically the practice, in which the practice reveals tacit conditions in order to realise the potential of a project. Rana Haddad and Pascal Hachem in their *Fly the Bullet* presentation (*Making Research Researching Making* Conference, Aarhus September 2015) illustrated how the creation and installation of mobile micro architecture projects can draw on the tacit unspoken, unspeakable political conditions and tensions in Beirut to point at (and here they refer in their title to dogfighter pilot Chuck Yeager's motto Fly the Bullet. Forget the plane just fly the bullet into position) new potentialities. This is a twist on the intended ADAPT<sup>r</sup> work package which deals with the explication of tacit knowledge within a practice to reveal that this can also be a design tactic. See also Richard Blythe's PhD *A Terroir of Terroir* in which he articulates designing as an elicitation of the virtual potential of projects understood as multilayered, conflictual contexts in which much is tacit an approach which repositions design as the ethical construction and revealing of a design space to enable the design project itself.

**Related terms in Creative Practice Research:** *intuition, experiential knowledge, unconscious/sub-conscious residues, hidden premises, biases, spatial intelligence, formation and formative history, fascinations, urges, sensitivities, routines, eidetic archive, finding one's voice, techniques of extraction, dissemination not of knowledge, but rather: dissemination of experience & dissemination of feeling, saying/showing distinction, floordrobe*

### **'Transformative Triggers' in Creative Practice Research**

The notion 'transformative triggers' serves to *induce reflection* in practice-based research both into the dynamic and possible transformation of a practice and into the roots and causes for the potential shifts and changes that may be observed in a practice. The observations may refer to a body of work in hindsight reflection

(see *reflection on*) or consist in close observation of ongoing practice (see *reflection in*). What triggers a re-orientation of the practice may either be factors external to *research* mode of the practice, e.g. a shift in the value system of the practitioner [see CPR Glossary entry: *Tacit Knowledge*] rooted outside the research context. The same 'trigger' could on the other side be the direct consequence of the practice-based research itself. A specific *explanatory gap* in the research can result in a new project that interrogates the bespoke issue in order to *close* the specific research gap through a transformed practice that responds to such gaps.

Some researchers create and distinguish between *tranches* of work that reflect transformations of the practice and respective *phases* which are being triggered by shifts in perspective, in approach, attitude, intended design outcome etc.; 'trigger' dimensions of this kind can themselves also be the subject of a transformational analysis by the researching practitioner (e.g. by asking what triggered a transformation in attitude which in turn triggered a shift in the practice). Creative practice research thus uses the term *transformative triggers* to sensitise the researcher towards detecting and analysing both transformations and *transformational stimuli* at different levels and phases of the practice and in different orders of knowledge under scrutiny. [see CPR Glossary entry: *Orders of Knowledge*]

The notion of 'transformative triggers' is of particular interest also within the context of the researcher's advancement of the discipline and his contribution to knowledge through the research [see CPR Glossary entry: *Contribution to Knowledge*], as the specific *research mode* into which the practitioner enters through her interrogations has the potential to *transform* and *enhance* the practice in fundamental ways [see CPR Glossary entry: *Practice in Research Mode*] This leads directly to the question of how both the transformation of a practice and the stimuli and triggers that may induce such a transformation can be instrumentalised, i.e. actively invoked as a *tool* within the *creative process* [see CPR Glossary entry: *Creativity*]. Transformations may thus be deliberately brought about by virtue of the practitioner's *awareness* and understood as an intended result of the creative ventures and dynamic endeavour.

Transformative Triggers refers specifically to transformations which are ascension moments in which there is also a positive qualitative shift. The 'trigger' can come in the form of gap analysis, reflection or practicing speculatively. Such speculation could be understood also as a form of undirected playfulness in which serendipity and chance combine with an acute sensitivity to new



possibilities of an order that is only achievable through mastery in a medium. In drawing terms this could be understood as drawing into an unknown which becomes known through the process of drawing, a material thinking beyond the limit of the present. *Riet Eeckhout's* PhD exhibition (*Process Drawing* RMIT 2014) provides an example of this kind of ascension through drawing.

**Related terms in Creative Practice Research:** *tranches of work, innovation of practice, transformation of past body of work, re-interpretation of relevance of back story, practice trajectories, ascension moment through research, conditions for change, emergence of new possibilities, opportunism, the quest for the 'new', the habitual, routines, disruption, techniques of 'forced association'*

# Bios

Richard Blythe is an academic and architect with extensive experience in practice based research. He is the primary author of the EU Marie Curie FP7 grant ADAPTr 2012-2016 and of the Australian OLT grant DAPr 2016-2017. Richard has published and spoken extensively on creative practice research and PhD training and generated over \$6M AUD in research income. As a founding director of the architecture practice Terroir Richard has received national and international design awards.

Michael Corr is an architect with over 15 years' experience in practice. He is director of Sult, a practice that provides strategic regeneration and urban development advice to public and private organizations across Northern Ireland. Prior to Sult, Michael was the Creative director of PLACE, the built Environment Centre for Northern Ireland and a senior urban designer/design advisor to the Mayor of London, as part of the team Design for London within the Greater London Authority (GLA). Michael was Founding Director of Pie architecture Ltd. a successful architecture/urban design/research practice in London and has been teaching architecture for 10 years across the UK and Internationally. Michael was an ADAPT-r Fellow in 2015-2016 and is a doctoral candidate at the Estonian Academy of Arts Faculty of Architecture, undertaking a PhD in architecture and urban planning.

Jo Crotch is an architect and teacher at the Mackintosh School of Architecture at GSA where she leads the Postgraduate Programs. Her research explores embodied experience and memory, which has resulted in a phenomenological approach to learning and teaching in the design of place

Laura Gonzalez is an artist and writer. Her work includes performance, film, dance, photography and text, and has been performed, exhibited and published across Europe and the United States. She became Atheneum Research Fellow at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2017 have in game previously been Academic Co-ordinator ( PGR ) at The glasgow school of Art. She was awarded a Readership in Contemporary Art and Performance Practice in 2016 by the University of Glasgow.

Eli Hatleskog is a trained architect (MNAL) and architectural theorist, who splits her time between practice and research. Her doctoral research was a 'PhD by Practice', (completed Dec. 2014) which considered architectural practice as a methodology for research and formed part of a multidisciplinary research project supporting the live process relating to the masterplanning of Norway's first socially sustainable carbon-neutral neighbourhood at Brøset, Trondheim. The Brøsetproject was a pilot project for the State's 'Cities of the Future' initiative, and, as such, sought to be at the forefront for innovative thinking regarding design processes, masterplanning and sustainable lifestyles. In 2015, she joined ADAPT-r ITN as a Marie Curie Experienced Researcher. ADAPT-r ITN (2012-16) sought to increase research capacity in Creative Practice Research across Europe. Based at theUniversity of Ljubljana, Eli conducted meta-research with creative practitioners (for the most part architects) into 'Public Behaviours' (or interactions) in creative

practice research. During this time, she helped to develop a method of group interviews, which took influence from how practitioners were observed testing and sharing knowledge through research conversations. Her core interest lies in improving the sustainability of our cities through collaborative enterprise. Where architectural design may provide ideas for the future, it is also part of the problem. In response to this Eli has begun to explore the idea of an architect who does not design buildings but designs networks for collaboration and negotiation across the building professions, government, academia and the public.

Katharine Heron is Professor of Architecture at the University of Westminster, and recent Head of the Department of Architecture. She is the founder and Director of Ambika P3. Her background is in practice as Feary + Heron Architects, and working with the arts and community organisations. She was awarded MBE in the New Years Honours 2015.

Anna M. Holder trained as an architect and town planner, and now research in the areas of architecture, urban design and creative practice. She was a Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at Aarhus School of Architecture, as part of the EU-funded ADAPT-r ITN. She currently lectures at the University for the Creative Arts. She is also a Director of social enterprise architecture practice Studio Polpo.

Gitte Juul is active in the practice [gittejuul.dk](http://gittejuul.dk) and [ballerup.dk/brug-byen/kunst/kontoret-kunst-i-byen](http://ballerup.dk/brug-byen/kunst/kontoret-kunst-i-byen). She is PhD fellow, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture / Aarhus School of Architecture. She is also teaching associate professor, School of Architecture, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. Recent projects / publications include The meaning of makeshift architecture, group exhibition, Works+Word Biennale, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, 2017; East West River, group exhibition, "En blank og vårfrisk dag", Workers Museum, Copenhagen 2016 and Connecting the separate, NORDIC – Journal of Architecture, No. 4. vol. 5, 2015

Karli Luik is an architect who graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in 2003. He has also studied at Ecole d'Architecture Paris-Val-de-Marne (1998/1999), in addition to University of Tartu, department of Semiotics (2000) and department of Human Geography (2001), as well as Central European University, where he completed MA in Gender Studies (2004/2005). He was founder and partner of Salto architects from 2004–2014. In 2014 he launched studio Kontekst in Tallinn. His work has been internationally published and awarded. He has won prizes on around 50 architecture, urban planning and design competitions. He was an ADAPT-r fellow at the University of Ljubljana in 2016. As a PhD candidate, he is enrolled both at the Estonian Academy of Arts and University of Ljubljana.

Robert Mantho is an architect, teacher, and researcher. He has worked in N.Y.C., London, Portland, and Vermont, working on a wide range of building projects, community projects and competitions. Robert is the Stage 5 Leader at the Mackintosh School of Architecture at the Glasgow School of Art. Robert's research is focused on urban spatial configuration, digital processes in the generation of space and collaborative design.

Claus Peder Pedersen is the head of research at the Aarhus School of Architecture. He is trained as an architect and has worked as a researcher, educator and occasional practitioner. His research is characterised by a strong interest

in artistic, design-based and design-embedded research methodologies ranging across various creative disciplines. He was board member in the EU-funded ADAPT-r ITN.

Kester Rattenbury, Professor of Architecture at the University of Westminster, is an architectural journalist, critic, author and teacher. She established the Research Centre for Experimental Practice, which developed the Archigram Archival Project and the Supercrit series. She has published widely and a major book on Thomas Hardy due in 2018.

Valentina Signore Valentina graduated in Architecture at the Università degli Studi Roma Tre (2008), she then gained a PhD in the field of Urban Studies, with the dissertation 'The Performative Project: How to recognise and interpret it' (2013). Since 2009 she is a registered architect in Italy. As a founding member of Tondo Atelier, she has been awarded several national and international competitions including European 2009, Vardo, Norway; and Figino, Abitare Sociale, Milano 2010. Among her main interests are the performing arts and philosophy that laterally inform all her works. Valentina's attitude is to move across different fields and to explore the territories where theory and practice meet. As a post-doc researcher in the ADAPT-r programme she studied nearly twenty creative practices and their creative practice researches, she organised workshops, training sessions and is co-author and co-curator of four books on the themes 'Case Studies' and 'Communities of Practice'.

Marcelo Stamm is a philosopher trained in Munich and Oxford who has been appointed as RMIT Vice-Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow to conduct research on creativity, design and innovation and investigate the paradigm of design practice research. He is the Deputy Dean of Research & Innovation at the School of Architecture & Design. Marcelo Stamm is the Director of the Practice Research Symposium in Europe which accommodates ADAPT-r and the wider PhD program.

Siv Helene Stangeland is founding partner and Principal Architect at Helen & Hard Architects, established with Reinhard Kropf in 1996. She was a Marie Curie Doctoral Fellow at Aarhus School of Architecture, as part of the EU-funded ADAPT-r ITN and was awarded the PhD degree in early 2017 for her practice-based research on the relational-designs and design capacities of Helen & Hard.

Sally Stewart is an architect and educator working in the Glasgow School of Art where she is the Head of the Mackintosh School of Architecture and Reader in Architectural Education and Practice. Her fascination with creativity began in childhood surrounded by parents, aunts and uncles engaged in creative practices for work and pleasure. This has fed a persistent curiosity in how we act when we are creative and informed her research interest in proactive based research.

Veronika Valk is an architect, she studied at the Rhode Island School of Design and graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts. She completed her PhD at the RMIT University School of Architecture and Design in Melbourne. She has constructed both public and private buildings, designed interiors and landscapes, won some 30 prizes at various architecture and planning competitions as well as published a number of critical essays on architecture and urbanism since 2004. Laureate of Young Architect Award 2012, she runs her practice Zizi&Yoyo, directs research at the Faculty of Architecture and

leads the PhD program in architecture at the Estonian Academy of Arts. She has been an editor of architecture, design and urbanism pages at Estonia's main cultural weekly *Sirp* and monthly *Müürileht*. Today, she is concurrently an adviser on architecture and design at the Ministry of Culture of Estonia.

Jo Van Den Berghe teaches experimental architectural design at KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture, Campus Sint-Lucas Brussels/Ghent, Belgium, in the experimental studio (Studio Anatomy). He works as a researcher at KU Leuven Department of Architecture and at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia and Barcelona, Spain, in the field of *Techné* and *Poiesis* in making architecture (the poetics of making). He is a visiting professor at Politecnico di Milano, Queen's University Belfast and EPFL Lausanne. Jo Van Den Berghe is a reflective practitioner-architect with a critical architectural practice in Belgium since 1986.

Maria Veltcheva is an architect and urban planner based in Rome and Berlin. She graduated in Architecture from La Sapienza in Rome, and subsequently was awarded a PhD. She has worked for Zaha Hadid Architects on the MAXXI in Rome, and for Renzo Piano in Berlin. She was appointed an Experienced Researcher on the ADAPT-r in 2013.

Johan Verbeke is a senior professor at Faculty of Architecture (KU Leuven, Belgium) and a professor and director of PhD at Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark). He was the initiator and PI of the ADAPT-r project and has been involved in many EC funded projects. Initially he was interested in the added value offered by digital technologies and more recently on knowledge processes in architecture and arts. He published extensively on research by design and artistic research. He is also council member of EAAE (where he is coordinating the research Academy), ELIA (where he is part of the Research Committee) and eCAADe.

Miranda Webster is an architect, teacher and researcher, dividing her time between practice and teaching at the Mackintosh School of Architecture. Her practice harnesses tactics developed within research in academia and in the studio, to pursue architectural interests in the use of drawing as a speculative tool and as a way of understanding building processes.

Tadeja Zupančič is Associate Professor and Vice-Dean for Research at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture. She teaches, supervises PhD-s and post-PhD-s, coordinates some EU projects and the doctoral programme in architecture. She promotes practice based research and research through design within the integral research tradition in architecture. Her specific research interests are the cultural dimensions of sustainable development and public participation in urban design as life-long action-based learning. She is Vice-President (elect) of the eCAADe - Education and research in Computer Aided Architectural Design in Europe, a member of the Research Academy of the EAAE - European Association for Architectural Education, and the representative of Slovenia in the Sub-Group Architects at the Unit for Professional Qualifications of the European Commission (DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs).



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